

August Blog

Seven simple tips for staying safe in the sun

Being safe in the sun matters for young children whose delicate skin burns easily, even on cloudy or mild days. Damage early in life can increase the risk of skin cancer later on. Schoolhouse Daycare is accredited with Sun Safe Nurseries, a national programme to safeguard children against Ultraviolet light (UV) and promote sun safe and healthy habits to our earliest learners. The programme has been created by [SKCIN - a Skin Cancer UK charity](#).

Here are some simple tips to help you take care of your little ones' skin:

1. Factor in skin protection

Young children, like adults, need to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen when outside. Apply the sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before going out in the sun to give it time to absorb. Aim to cover all the areas that will be exposed to the sun including ears, hands, feet and behind the neck. At Schoolhouse Daycare we apply SPF (Sun Protection Factor) 30 to children every 20 minutes. Higher factors can block the skin's pores and cause rashes.

2. Keep an eye on the time and seek shade

The NHS recommends we avoid the sun's rays between 11am and 3pm. Shady outside play areas are essential and can be created using trees, parasols or umbrellas. (B and Q sell a shade sail which is currently on sale for £12).

Always keep pushchairs in the shade and out of direct sunlight.



3. Get familiar with the UV index

The UV Index (or UVI) is a standard, international measure of ultraviolet radiation. For example, if the UVI is 3-5 there is a moderate risk of skin damage and we should wear protective clothing and use sunscreen; if the UVI is 6-7 there is a high risk, SPF 50 should be used and shade sought.

Children are more sensitive to UV radiation than adults, and therefore require additional protection at lower levels. UV rays can be strong even when it's cool or overcast, especially during spring and summer. Parents and carers can check the UV index here:

<https://www.sunsafenurseries.co.uk/uv-forecast/>.

4. Dress to be cool

When out in the sun, children may be more comfortable in loose, long-sleeved clothes. In very hot weather we could follow the example of the Bedouin (a nomadic tribe living in the desert) and wear loose-fitting black clothing. Black coloured fabrics are a better radiator of heat – meaning they absorb heat emanating from the body – which helps cool the body down. The ideal hat is one with a wide-brim and some children may tolerate wearing UV-protective sunglasses.

5. Keep everyone hydrated !

Offering regular drinks of fresh, cool water throughout the day will help your child avoid getting ill from dehydration in warmer weather. We make drinking water available throughout the day at Schoolhouse Daycare.

6. Treating heat exhaustion and sunburn

Signs of heat exhaustion include tiredness, dizziness, a headache and weakness. Children (and some adults!) may become irritable. If you need to cool someone down, spray or sponge them with cold water. Stay with them, check they don't get too cold and they should start to cool down and feel better within 30 minutes.



Treat sunburn by cooling the skin and applying an aftersun product, drinking plenty of water and avoiding direct sunlight on the affected area. Hot weather can also exacerbate existing conditions such as asthma, or eczema. We can help our children learn to listen to their bodies and encourage them to take a break from physical activity when they start to feel too hot or uncomfortable.

7. Look after yourself and model positive habits.

Be kind to yourself; work out what makes your life easier, whether it's packing a 'sunkit' for days out or planning indoor activities when the UVI is high. Remember to look after yourself too. If you find yourself getting irritable or headachy, ask yourself if you have been applying all the above tips to yourself: "Put on your own oxygen mask before helping others"! Furthermore, our children learn from us, so when we demonstrate positive sun protection behaviours ourselves, we set a good example. For example, let your little ones see you drinking plenty of fluids and applying your sunscreen.

