

Tips for Sun Safety

Most families with young children welcome outdoor fun and sunny days! But before you and your child take off for the parks and playgrounds, here are some sun safety tips.



Sun facts

We all need some sunlight to stay healthy. Sun exposure helps our skin produce vitamin D, which helps us absorb calcium for healthy bones. The amount of time in sunlight needed to produce enough Vitamin D is only 10 to 15 minutes per day a few times a week, depending on skin tone.

Children of all skin tones need protection from dangerous ultraviolet (UV) rays. Too much sun exposure can cause sunburn and possibly lead to skin cancer.



Outdoor Time

Outdoor play is essential. All children need opportunities for physical play and exploration outdoors. For safety's sake, try to avoid the sun's peak hours, generally between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Seek shade if your shadow is shorter than you.

Sunscreen. Select a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a factor of SPF 30 or higher. Apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of skin, including cheeks, neck, arms, legs, behind the ears, and on the nose. Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before going out, even on cloudy days. Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming.

Clothing. Dress your child in lightweight clothing that covers as much of the body as possible to protect against the sun's rays. Send your child to school with a hat with a brim, marked with his or her name. The best way to protect eyes is to wear sunglasses, but not all sunglasses are the same. Look for labels stating that sunglasses provide 100 percent UV protection.



Talk to your child

Give your child a positive message about the sun. "We need the sun to build strong bones, to help our gardens grow, and to make lovely sun tea." Remind your child to use sunscreen and wear a hat and sunglasses every day.

Be a sun safety role model

Wear a hat and sunglasses, and apply sunscreen when heading outside. Your child will follow your example.

A message from your child's teacher _____