



# A Guide for Parents

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Maine Center for Disease  
Control and Prevention

An Office of the  
Department of Health and Human Services

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner

Maine Comprehensive Cancer Control Program

August 2009

Dear Parents,

Here at Protect ME Childcare Center, we take great pride in knowing that we are a part of your child's growth and development. Doing our part to make sure that your child grows into a healthy adult is very important to us, and because of this, we take issues of safety, like sun protection, very seriously.

While playing outdoors is an important part of being an active, healthy child, doing so without sun protection can be very dangerous. Over 90% of all skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to the sun, and a person gets a majority of his or her lifetime sun exposure during childhood. **So, not only can skin cancer be prevented, but by making sun safety a priority when our children are young, together we are giving them the very best chance of avoiding skin cancer in the future!**

Our center is dedicated to doing everything we can to protect your child from getting too much sun, however, we cannot do this without your support. The purpose of this packet is to provide you with information about sun safety, our center's commitment to sun protection, and how you can help us make a difference in the health of your child! Inside you will find information to answer the following questions:

- What is the center's policy on sun safety and how can parents help?
- What should I pack to help keep my child safe while at the center?
- How can I protect my child from the sun at home and on weekends?
- What is the UV index and what does SPF mean?
- What about sunscreen?
- Where can I find more information?

With your help, we are confident that we can keep your child safe from the sun, and most importantly, reduce his or her risk for developing skin cancer later in life. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support. It is appreciated!

Sincerely,



Andrea G. Fletcher  
Protect ME Childcare Center

## SAMPLE PAGE

Please Note: This page is a fictional sample.  
Text in Gray indicates suggested areas to adapt.

To recreate this page for YOUR CENTER, use the files:

MODIFY ME\_ParentPacketLetter.doc  
ParentPacketLetter\_GRAPHICS.pdf

When printed together, this page will result!



## Protect ME Childcare Center's Sun Safety Policy

At Protect ME Childcare Center we recognize that playing outdoors is an important part of a growing child's physical, mental, and social health. However, we also know that too much exposure to the sun's dangerous UV rays during early childhood can greatly increase a child's risk of developing skin cancer later in life. While individuals of all ages benefit from protecting their skin from the sun, young children have the potential to gain the most from learning and practicing sun safety, not only because it can reduce early childhood UV exposure, but also because it may lead to the development of healthy, life-long sun protection habits. The sun safety guidelines outlined below will be communicated and reinforced to center staff and parents through letters, notices, and above all, site practice. By working together to keep to these guidelines, parents and staff members can make sure that children enjoy their valuable time in the sun in the safest way possible.

### SAMPLE PAGE

Please Note: This policy is a fictional sample.

#### Staff members will:

1. Strongly encourage children to wear wide-brimmed hats when playing outdoors, especially between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
2. Strongly encourage children to wear broad-spectrum sunglasses that reflect 100% of UV rays when playing outdoors, especially between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
3. Require children to wear sun-protective clothing including long pants/long shorts and long-sleeved/sleeved shirts when playing outdoors, especially between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (weather permitting).
4. Identify shade in outdoor play areas and Strongly encourage children to play in these areas, especially if a child is not wearing other forms of sun protection.
5. Thirty minutes prior to allowing children to play outdoors, apply sunscreen SPF 30 or greater to exposed skin of all children whose parents have signed a sunscreen agreement.
6. Make an effort to reduce exposure to sunlight from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. whenever possible (10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the winter months).
7. Incorporate sun safety and skin protection into activities and/or lessons.
8. Distribute sun safety information and materials to parents/guardians of children.
9. Participate in staff sun safety and skin cancer prevention training provided by the center.
10. Serve as role models for children under their care by personally practicing sun protection (wearing hats, sunglasses, sunscreen) while at the center.





## Protect ME Childcare Center's Sun Safety Policy (continued)

### Parents and/or guardians of children will:

1. Be required to provide a wide-brimmed hat for his or her child(ren) to keep at school and wear when participating in outdoor activities. Hats should protect the child's ears, face and neck. Hats should be clearly labeled with the child's name, and taken home once a week for cleaning.
2. Be asked to provide broad-spectrum sunglasses for his or her child(ren) to keep at school and wear when participating in outdoor activities. UV-protective coating may also be applied to prescription glasses.
3. Be asked to provide protective clothing for his or her child(ren). Light-colored, tightly woven, loose fitting, lightweight clothing is best for sun protection.
4. Be asked to apply sunscreen and lip balm, SPF 15 or greater, to child at home before he or she arrives at Childcare.
5. Be required to provide sunscreen, SPF 30 or greater, for staff to reapply/apply to children before midday activities. Parental sunscreen agreement will be sent home for this purpose.

This policy was created on March 29, 2009, and will be monitored and reviewed for effectiveness by staff members two years from this date.

## SAMPLE PAGE

Please Note: This policy is a fictional sample.  
Text in Gray indicates suggested areas to adapt.

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MODIFY ME\_SunSafetyPolicy.doc  
SunSafetyPolicyParentPacket\_GRAPHICS.pdf

When printed together, these pages will result!



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## Childcare Sun Safety Packing List

Protecting the children that we care for is very important to us, but because our center cares for many children, it can be difficult for the center to provide the necessary personal sun safety items for each child. Your support in preparing your child's bag with the items needed to safely play in the sun is tremendously appreciated, and helps us make sure we have the items we need to keep your child safe.

**When packing for a day at the center, please remember to include the following items:**



### Summer:

- Sunglasses that protect against both UVA and UVB rays
- A lightweight, light-colored T-shirt
- Close-toed shoes like sneakers
- A wide-brimmed hat (legionnaire-style hats work best!)
- Sunscreen SPF 15 or greater clearly labeled with your child's name



### Fall:

- Sunglasses that protect against both UVA and UVB rays
- A lightweight, light-colored, long-sleeved shirt or sweatshirt
- Long pants
- Close-toed shoes like sneakers
- A wide-brimmed hat (legionnaire-style hats work best!)
- Sunscreen SPF 15 or greater clearly labeled with your child's full name



### Winter:

- Sunglasses that protect against both UVA and UVB rays
- A winter hat with a wide brim (best if it also covers the ears!)
- Sunscreen SPF 15 or greater clearly labeled with your child's full name



### Spring:

- Sunglasses that protect against both UVA and UVB rays
- A lightweight, light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, sweatshirt, or spring jacket
- Long pants
- Close-toed shoes like sneakers
- A wide-brimmed hat (legionnaire-style hats work best!)
- Sunscreen SPF 15 or greater clearly labeled with your child's full name

# SUNBLOCKS SUNBLOCKS

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## Practice Sun Protection at Home!

Protecting young children from the sun is not always easy, but there are a few simple things you can do while at home or on vacation to lessen his or her amount of sun exposure. **Even one sunburn during this part of a child's life can do enough damage to the skin to lead to skin cancer as an adult.** Please help us in teaching the children about skin protection and sun safety by practicing these skills during summer and winter breaks, and on weekends.

**Wearing sunscreen SPF 15+ to protect a child's skin is a bright idea, but wearing sunscreen AND using another form of sun protection is BRILLIANT!**

### Block with a hat!



Wearing sunscreen SPF 15+ and a wide-brimmed hat is the best way to protect little ears, faces and necks from the sun.

### Block with shades!



Wearing sunscreen SPF 15+ and sunglasses that protect against both UVA and UVB rays is the best way to protect little eyes from the sun.

### Block with a shirt!



Wearing sunscreen SPF 15+ and sun protective clothing is the best way to protect little shoulders, backs, tummies, arms and legs from the sun.

### Block with a shadow!



Wearing sunscreen SPF 15+ and doing your best to avoid the sun during peak sun hours (10 a.m.-4 p.m.) is the best way to protect little ones from the sun.

**It is important to practice sun safety everyday.**

Just because you can't see the sun shining doesn't mean it isn't there!

**It is also important to practice sun safety all year round.**

Most people think that the sun is only dangerous on hot, summer days, but when the sun reflects off of the water, sand, and even snow, it can also be very dangerous!

**Precautions should be taken in the summer, fall, winter and spring, even on cloudy days.**

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## Sun Protection Glossary

**Ultraviolet (UV) Index:** The UV index is a measure of the risk for sunburn on a given day. Collected via satellite and adjusted for environmental conditions such as humidity, wind and clouds. The UV index ranges from 1-11+ with 1 being the lowest sun intensity, and 11+ being the most dangerous.

The UV Index can help you determine how much protection your child might need for a given day. For more information on the UV index and to find the daily index for your home area, visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

**UVA Rays:** UVA radiation comes from sun lamps, tanning beds or booths, and most directly, from the sun. These rays go most deeply into the skin, and since the ozone absorbs very few UVA rays, most of a person's sun exposure comes from UVA rays.

**UVB Rays:** UVB radiation also comes from the sun, but is more dangerous than UVA radiation. These rays are less often absorbed by the ozone and are the cause of most sunburns.

**UVC Rays:** UVC rays are not a danger to a person's skin. These rays are absorbed by the ozone layer before they have the chance to reach the earth.

**Sun Protection Factor (SPF):** The Sun Protection Factor is the ratio of time to develop a sunburn wearing a specific sunscreen as compared to the time to develop a sunburn without sunscreen. For example, an SPF 15 will provide a person who burns in 10 minutes, 150 minutes of sun protection.

### You can do the SPF math!



If sunscreen is SPF 30 x Burn in 5 minutes without sunscreen  
= 150 minutes of protection with SPF 30 sunscreen!

SPF x Minutes it would take for your child to burn if NOT wearing sunscreen  
= Minutes of protection your child will get with that SPF sunscreen

**Broad Spectrum:** A term used by manufacturers of sunglasses, sunscreen and clothing that tells you that the product protects against both UVA and UVB rays.

**Vitamin D:** A nutrient that helps us grow and maintain strong bones. Adults and children can get the Vitamin D they need from very limited exposure to the sun's rays. Vitamin D is also found in foods such as fish, cheese, egg yolks and Vitamin D fortified foods such as milk, breakfast cereals, orange juice, yogurt and margarine.

**Water Resistant:** When used to describe sunscreen, this means that a sunscreen maintains its SPF after two 20-minute sessions in water or moderate physical activity. (Also sometimes called "sweat proof")

**Waterproof:** When used to describe sunscreen, this means that a sunscreen maintains its SPF after 80 minutes of being in the water or extreme physical activity.

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## Sunscreen Agreement

The use of sunscreen is a great way to give children extra sun protection when participating in outdoor activities, however, due to skin reactions, allergies and the preferences of parents, our center does not automatically assume responsibility for applying sunscreen to children. Please indicate how you would like us to use sunscreen with your child by selecting and completing one of the two statements below:

As the parent or guardian of the child named below, **I give permission** to \_\_\_\_\_ to apply sunscreen SPF 15 or greater to my child prior to his/her participation in outdoor activities.  
Childcare Center

**I will provide sunscreen, clearly labeled with my child's name, for this purpose.**

\*For medical reasons, please do not apply sunscreen to the following areas of my child's body:

\*Please indicate any known allergies to sunscreens:

As the parent or guardian of the child named below, **I do not give permission** to \_\_\_\_\_ to apply sunscreen SPF 15 or greater to my child prior to his/her participation in outdoor activities.  
Childcare Center

**I will apply sunscreen to my child prior to his/her daily arrival at the center.**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_





## Where to Obtain Sun Safety Materials and Educational Information

For more information on how to keep your child safe in the sun, please contact the organizations listed below:

### **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

*Play It Safe in the Sun: A Guide for Parents (Printable Pamphlet)*

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/chooseyourcover/guide.htm>

### **KidsHealth for Parents**

[http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid\\_safe/outdoor/sun\\_safety.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/outdoor/sun_safety.html)

### **Skin Cancer Foundation**

<http://www.skincancer.org/healthy-skin-beauty/protect-your-kids/>

### **American Cancer Society**

*A Parent's Guide to Skin Protection (Free Pamphlet)*

Call toll-free 1-800-ACS-2345

### **Sun Safety**

[www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED\\_7.asp?sitearea=PED](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED_7.asp?sitearea=PED)

### **American Academy of Pediatrics**

*Protecting Your Child From the Sun*

[http://www.aap.org/publiced/br\\_sunsafety.htm](http://www.aap.org/publiced/br_sunsafety.htm)

### **American Academy of Dermatology**

*Sun Protection For Children*

[http://www.aad.org/public/publications/pamphlets/sun\\_sunprotection.html](http://www.aad.org/public/publications/pamphlets/sun_sunprotection.html)

### **Melanoma Foundation of New England**

*Precious Children, Fragile Skin (Printable Pamphlet)*

<http://www.mfne.org/?page=brochures>

### **The Maine Cancer Consortium**

*Sun Safety for ME (Printable Pamphlet)*

[http://www.maineccancerconsortium.org/resources\\_tools.php](http://www.maineccancerconsortium.org/resources_tools.php)

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

*SunWise Program: UV Index*

<http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html>



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**For more information, please contact:**

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 Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DHHS  
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 Key Plaza, 5th Floor  
 Augusta, ME 04333



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