

Sun Safety for Child Care Programs: Outcomes of a Targeted Funding Opportunity, 2018



Aligning with the *South Dakota (SD) Cancer Control State Plan 2015-2020*, the SD Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (SD CCCP) released a funding opportunity to child care programs across SD in March 2018 aimed at reducing exposure to ultraviolet radiation among youth. Home based child care programs could request \$250 and center-based programs \$500 to implement a sun safety policy and one evidence-based intervention. Ten child care programs were selected for funding from the 19 applicants through a competitive review. The awarded child care programs served over 800 children combined throughout the state. In addition to the funding, the SD CCCP also provided technical assistance to support policy development, project implementation, and aid in reporting.

Summary of Grantee Projects

Awardees were required to adopt a sun safety policy and at least one educational or environmental strategy to support the policy. The SD DOH developed a [Sun Safety for Child Care Programs Model Policy](#) to guide policy development and adoption. All programs implemented more than one sun safety practice in addition to policy implementation. Nine of the ten programs installed a shade structure on the playground areas of the facility. Four programs which had not required sunscreen, elected to provide and make sunscreen use mandatory. All programs provided education to staff and parents, and nine provided education on sun safety to the children as part of the program's curriculum. Four provided sunglasses and/or hats to children for outside time.

Outcome Data

Grantees completed a survey prior to project initiation and upon completion of the project period. Additionally, programs provided a copy of the program's Sun Safety Policy and a final progress report outlining barriers and successes in implementing the outlined activities.

Sun Safety Policy Implementation

Prior to starting the project, no programs had a sun safety policy. At the end of the project period, all ten programs had successfully implemented a sun safety policy. The model policy includes 14 sun safety guidelines. The programs adopted between 10 and 14 of these guidelines within their adopted policies, for an average of 12.8 guidelines per policy.

South Dakota Comprehensive Cancer Control Program

The South Dakota Cancer Control Program (SD CCCP) aims to improve cancer outcomes by connecting individuals and statewide organizations working in cancer control through the SD Cancer Coalition. The SD CCCP develops the state cancer plan¹, which guides priority efforts in cancer control statewide. Funding opportunities released annually support activities of the state cancer plan in the areas of cancer prevention, early detection, and cancer survivorship. Individuals and organizations interested in making a difference in cancer prevention and control are encouraged to join the SD Cancer Coalition:
www.cancersd.com/join-us.

Educational and Environmental Changes

Nine sites installed shade structures, varying from large portable umbrellas to shade sails over large portions of the playground. Many grantees noted the ability to provide shade as a very important aspect of the funding.

“The shade structures in our playground provided by the grant has been such a blessing. We use them every day and it has reduced our sun exposure tremendously.”

All programs offered training to staff on the sun safety policy and guidelines, seven trained staff on proper sunscreen application, and five trained staff on proper protocols for skin allergies. Education provided to parents at all ten sites covered use of sunscreen and sun-protective clothing, as well as providing information about sun safety policy at the programs. Children at nine sites learned about sun safety, highlighting the use of sunscreen and shade areas. Hands-on activities at some sites included decorating hats to wear when out on the playground and checking the UV Index in our daily circle time.

“The education piece that was implemented through the development of a sun safe policy and the training that the staff members helped increase the confidence of the staff members. They stated that knowing how and when to apply sunscreen helped them feel more competent in know how to teach children and families to be safe in the sun.”

Both sunscreen and protective clothing (including sunglasses) are recommended practices for reducing UV exposure in child care settings.² Funding was used to purchase hats and/or sunglasses at four of the sites, with grantees indicating high compliance by the children.

“The best part of this grant was seeing the kids’ excitement over the new hats and sun shade. We also feel that this project gave us some inspiration on how to further improve our play area to make it even safer for the kids.”

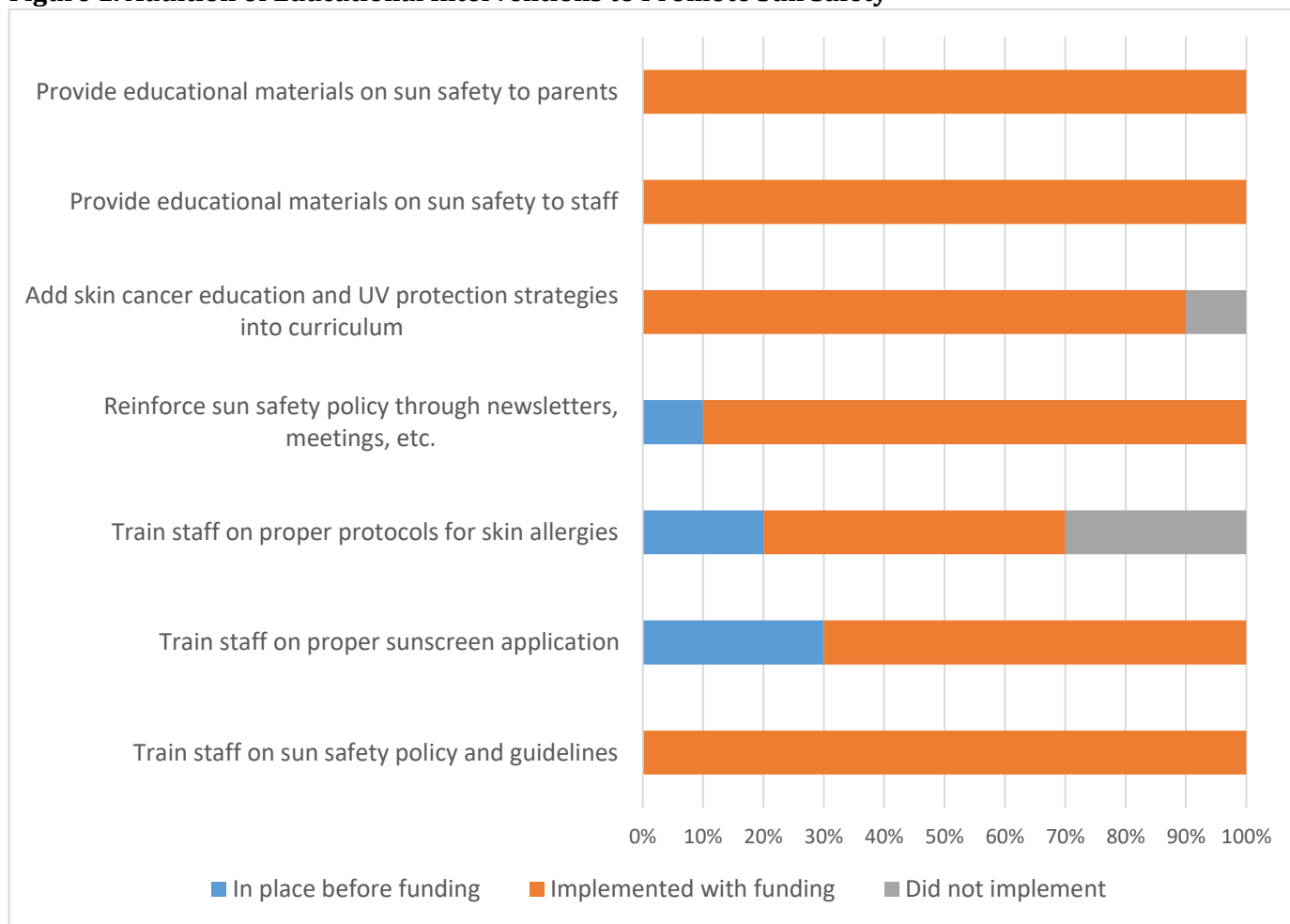


UV Protection Practices

A pre/post funding survey assessed the extent to which education, practices and the environment changed because of the project. Figure 1 outlines a variety of educational components targeted to staff, parents and children. Overall, most programs provided sun safety education, and the vast majority implemented multiple educational interventions. All ten facilities provided education to parents and staff and trained staff of the sun safety policy and its guidelines.

“Our preschoolers have learned to be excited about sun safety. We have included checking the UV Index in our daily circle time, and kids will ask us about what the index is periodically.”

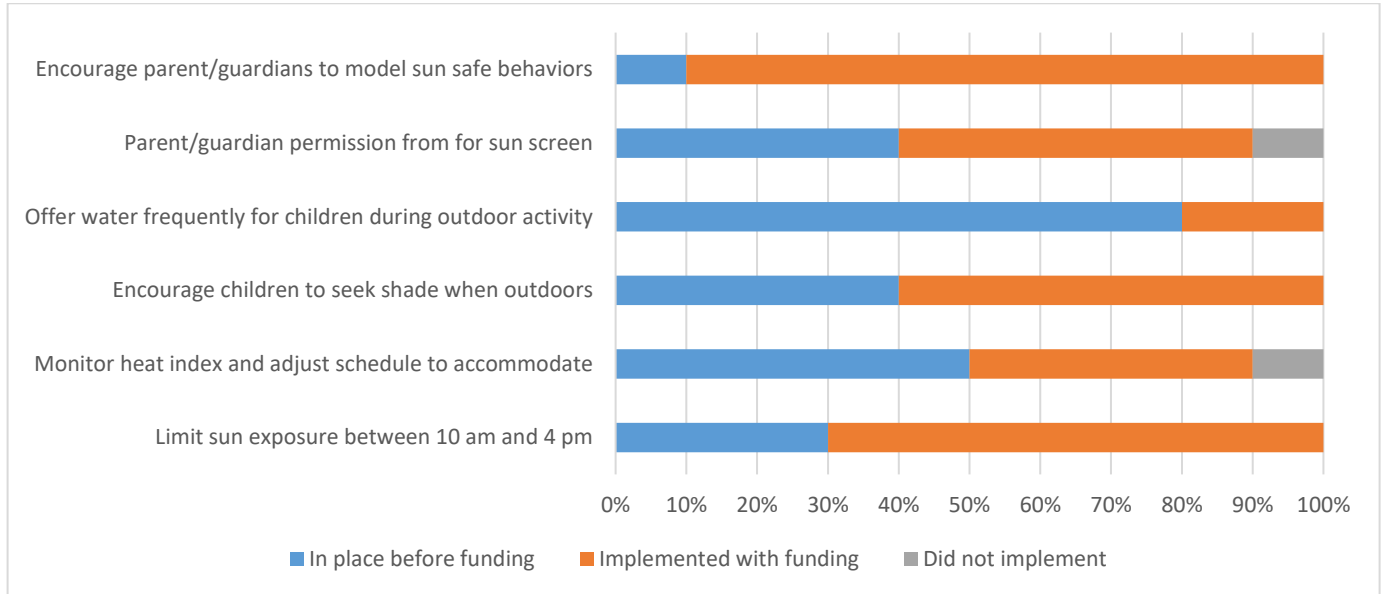
Figure 1. Addition of Educational Interventions to Promote Sun Safety



“The UV index chart probably got the most comments, because it is posted daily in an area that everyone sees, parents and staff alike were discussing it.”

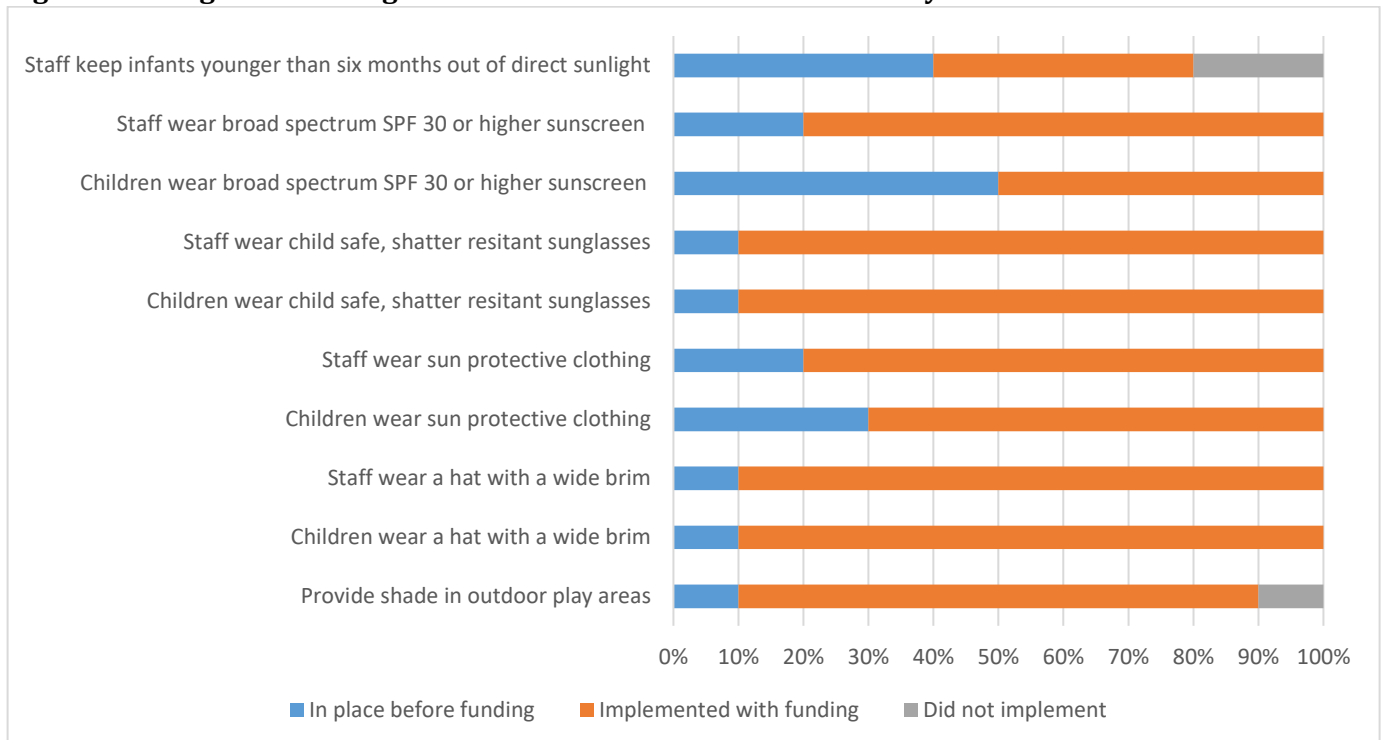
All ten programs had at least one sun safety practice in place prior to the funding. Participating centers adopted nearly all of the recommended sun safety practices (Figure 2). Encouraging parents/guardians to model sun safety, limiting sun exposure during peak sun hours, and encouraging children to seek shade when outdoors were the most commonly implemented practices.

Figure 2. Addition of Sun Safety Practices



Environmental changes were common among the programs. All ten child care facilities now encourage or require eight of the ten recommended environmental changes from the model policy (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Changes to the Program Environment to Promote Sun Safety



Summary

Ultraviolet radiation exposure is a known cause of skin cancer, and one bad sunburn in childhood doubles the risk of skin cancer later in life.³ Children’s skin needs protection from the sun’s harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays whenever they are outdoors. Educational and behavioral interventions through child care centers are recommended activities to reduce the risk of skin cancer.² All of the grantee child care programs implemented a sun safety policy, education and evidenced-based strategies to increase sun safe practices. Over 800 children across ten child care programs, representing 13 individual childcare locations, statewide were impacted with grant funding totaling less than \$4,500.

“Overall, we are very thankful for this grant opportunity and to be involved in this project to help support our small daycare in a very small community in rural South Dakota.”

Pre/post survey data demonstrated gains in education and practices. The environment and system-level changes implemented through these grants will continue to benefit children into the future.

“We implemented educational interventions, policies, and environmental changes to promote sun-protective behaviors. We provided information about sun safety and the effects of UV rays by posting posters around the daycare, having a “sun safety” theme week, and staff modeled proper sun safety.

“We will keep the policy in affect for the foreseeable future and will continue to train new hires on how to be sun safe.”

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