

# SUN SAFETY PRACTICES IN SOUTH DAKOTA CHILD CARE SETTINGS

2021 EVALUATION REPORT



## SUN SAFETY PROGRAM

The SD Department of Health (DOH) Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (SD CCCP) funded nine child care programs in 2021 across SD through a competitive application aimed at advancing health equity and *equitably* reducing exposure to ultraviolet radiation among all infants and children in care, including *removing economic and social obstacles to health for children in care*. Programs requested up to \$500 to adopt a sun safety policy and implement education and environmental strategies to support implementation of the policy.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Child care programs implemented evidence-based policy, system, and environmental changes that made an impact on sun safety practices that reduce exposure to UV in staff, children, and parents. Funding played a key role to support implementation of specific sun safety practices. Grantees received ongoing technical assistance and resources to support policy development, project implementation, and aid in reporting as outlined in the project design.

## PROJECT DESIGN

The project included a multi-component approach to address sun safety policy and environmental change, with an emphasis on advancing health equity.

- Training conducted by SD DOH on sun safety practices approved by Department of Social Services.
- Staff received certification for completion to support annual training requirements.

EDUCATION & TRAINING



- Provided by SD DOH bi-monthly via telephone or Zoom platform.
- Assistance provided through e-mail as needed.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



- Sun safety curriculums.
- Sun safety products.
- Education resources and learning activities.

RESOURCES



9

*Child Care Programs Funded*

812

*Infants & Children Impacted*

\$4,500

*Project Funding*

74

*Staff Trained on Sun Safety*



# RESULTS

The findings from the project identified an overall positive impact on sun safety practices in child care facilities. Upon project completion, all nine child care facilities developed and implemented an approved Sun Safety Policy, including many of the guidelines outlined in the model policy which guided the project, [Sun Safety for Child Care Programs Model Policy](#).

## ADDITION OF EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

Education was provided by the facilities to support sun safety practices (see Figure 1). Most facilities added educational interventions regarding sun safety that had not been in place before funding. Children received education on sun safety practices and the UV Index through curriculum, learning activities (see Figure 2), and educational materials. Staff across all facilities were educated on sun safety practices and how to support a sun safe environment through training, educational materials, and staff meetings. Eight of nine facilities trained staff on protocol for skin allergies. All facilities reinforced the sun safety policy through newsletters and meetings, which had not been in place before funding in seven facilities.

Figure 2: Sample Sun Safety Activity



FIGURE 1: ADDITION OF EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

	IN PLACE BEFORE FUNDING	IMPLEMENTED WITH FUNDING	DID NOT IMPLEMENT
Reinforce sun safety policy through newsletters, meetings, etc.	22%	78%	0%
Add skin cancer education and UV protection strategies into curriculum	11%	89%	0%
Provide educational materials on sun safety to staff	22%	78%	0%
Provide educational materials on sun safety to parents	11%	89%	0%
Train staff on sun safety policy and guidelines	33%	67%	0%
Train staff on proper sunscreen application	44%	56%	0%
Train staff on proper protocols for skin allergies	44%	44%	11%

“I feel that both the kids and staff are much more aware of the need for sunscreen and are in a great habit of putting it on before heading outdoors.”

[Child Care Center Administrator]

### ADDITION OF SUN SAFETY PRACTICES

Most facilities reinforced sun safety practices for staff, children, and/or parents, some of which had not been in place before funding (see Figure 3). Notably, over half of facilities already had three sun safety practices in place prior to funding, including limiting sun exposure, encouraging children to seek shade when outdoors, and offering water frequently during outdoor activity. Eight of nine facilities added a parent/guardian permission form for sunscreen, with one who already had this practice in place. Most facilities encouraged parents/guardians to model sun safe behaviors with funding, with one who did not implement this practice. Facilities also added activities that encouraged monitoring the UV Index by children and staff to ensure safe outdoor play (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Sample UV Index Poster

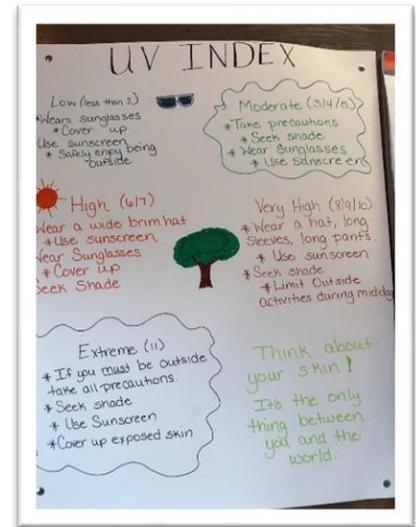


FIGURE 3: ADDITION OF SUN SAFETY PRACTICES

	IN PLACE BEFORE FUNDING	IMPLEMENTED WITH FUNDING	DID NOT IMPLEMENT
Limit sun exposure between 10 am and 4 pm	67%	33%	0%
Monitor heat index and adjust schedule to accommodate	44%	56%	0%
Encourage children to seek shade when outdoors	67%	33%	0%
Offer water frequently for children during outdoor activity	78%	22%	0%
Parent/guardian permission form for sun screen	11%	89%	0%
Encourage parent/guardians to model sun safe behaviors	11%	78%	11%

### ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

All grantees used the funding to purchase shade structures, including umbrellas, shade canopies, and shade sails (see Figure 5). Many of the environmental changes added to the facilities resulted from funding and had not been in place prior (see Figure 6). All nine childcare facilities now encourage or require the ten recommended environmental changes, with four facilities that require children to wear sunscreen. Additional changes required by three facilities included children and staff wearing sun protective equipment and the facility providing sun safe equipment for children if parents are unable, which helps support equitable access for all children in care. Facilities arranged outdoor activities so children have sufficient areas of shade. Wide brim hats were purchased and worn by some children and staff. Grantees implemented most of the environmental changes recommended in the model policy.

Figure 5: Example of Shade Canopy

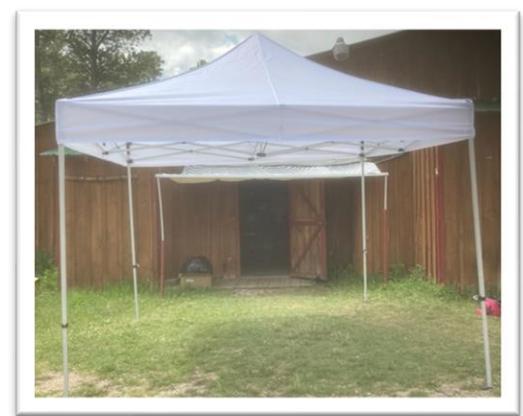


FIGURE 6: ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES TO PROMOTE SUN SAFETY

	IN PLACE BEFORE FUNDING	IMPLEMENTED WITH FUNDING
Provide shade in outdoor play areas	22%	78%
Children wear a hat with a wide brim	0%	100%
Staff wear a hat with a wide brim	0%	100%
Children wear sun protective clothing	0%	100%
Staff wear sun protective clothing	0%	100%
Children wear child safe, shatter resistant sunglasses	0%	89%
Staff wear child safe, shatter resistant sunglasses	0%	100%
Children wear broad spectrum SPF 30 or higher sunscreen	67%	33%
Staff wear broad spectrum SPF 30 or higher sunscreen	11%	89%
Staff keep infants younger than six months out of direct sunlight	33%	67%
Parents/Guardians are asked to provide sun-safe equipment for child's use when outdoors in care setting.	11%	89%
Childcare facility provides sun-safe equipment for child's use when outdoors in care setting if parents/guardians are unable.	22%	78%

*Note. All interventions were either in place or implemented with funding.*

“The Club was able to protect more youth by providing them with sunscreen, hats, and shade that gave them extra skin protection.”

[After School Child Care Administrator]



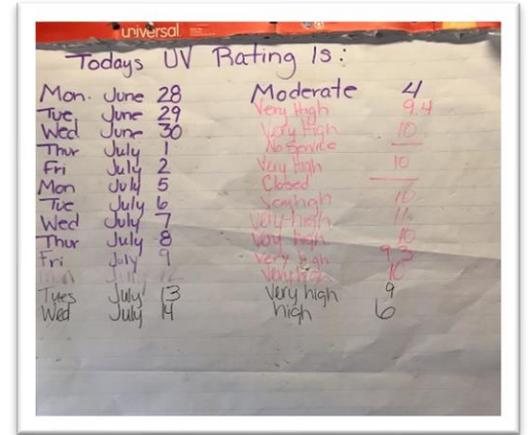
## SUCCESS, BARRIERS & FUTURE PLANS

- Successes** - Project data and grantee feedback highlight the positive impact this project has on policy and environmental change in child care facilities. The project had the largest impact in increasing awareness and education regarding sun safety practices, including the UV Index (see Figure 7). This project also helped to increase awareness and engagement among parents/guardians regarding sun safety practices at home. Environmental changes were well received by staff and children, including sun hats and shade structures. This project provided an opportunity to train staff on sun safety practices and provide resources and information to educate children in their

care. Two previously funded facilities indicated the value of additional funding to strengthen the current sun-safety policy. Further, one facility used this project as an opportunity to educate patrons of a local pool on sun safety.

- Barriers** - Some facilities experienced challenges with accessing appropriate supplies to support the implementation of project activities, including shade structures and sunscreen. Employee buy-in proved challenging for some facilities regarding role modeling by adopting individual sun safety practices, including sunscreen and shade use. While not a current barrier, staff turnover was noted as a concern moving forward regarding keeping staff trained.
- Future Plans** - Overall, grantees indicated future plans to support a sun safe environment for children in their care. Many facilities plan to continue educating and training staff on sun safety practices and the policy, with a few facilities focused on enforcing policy guidelines specific to sun safety clothing and staff role modeling. Parent engagement will also be elevated, including providing education regarding sun safety practices, sharing the policy, and reissuing the parent permission form annually. Facilities will continue to educate children on sun safety practices and engage in learning activities. Additional plans focus on adding a permanent shade structure and bringing a local dermatologist to educate staff on sun safety practices. The long-term impact will continue to be measured.
- Opportunities** – Opportunities for the SD CCP to elevate the project include making video training available for staff employed by all child care facilities who have participated in this project. The model policy will also be evaluated for its current content and opportunities for enhancement.

Figure 7: Example UV Rating Tracking



A small amount of funding combined with technical assistance, access to resources, and collaboration with staff and parents highlights the impact the program can have on child care facilities.

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