Sturt Street Early Learning Centre
Hot Weather Policy

This policy operates from September 1st until April 31st. Extra care must be taken between the times of 10:00am and 3:00pm.

The months from May 1st to August 31st: care must be taken when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above.

PURPOSE

It must be recognised that the risk of heat illness can be a factor of air temperature, air movement, radiant heat and humidity levels.

As young children are at more danger of suffering from heat related illness than adults, our purpose is to educate all carers and children about these risks. To notice the signs of heat related illness and provide the appropriate steps to prevent heat illness in all children.

“Children sweat less and get less evaporative cooling than adults. In warm and hot weather they have greater difficulty getting rid of heat; they look flushed, and feel hotter and more stressed than adults”.


AIM

Our aim at Sturt Street Community School and Early Learning Centre is

- To raise all staff awareness and responsibility about the prevention of heat illness. To do this we will:
  - Educate staff, children and families about heat related illnesses.
  - Make sound decisions to ensure children are protected from the heat.
  - Provide an environment that allows safe indoor and outdoor experiences throughout the year.

PROCEDURES

Clothing:

- Parents are encouraged to dress children in clothing that minimises heat gain. This includes layers that can be easily removed during activities, loose fitting clothes are best.
- Clothes must be sun safe:
  - The UPF rating on many garments indicates how good the fabric is at blocking UVR but also consider the design. Shirts with long sleeves and high collars, hats that shade the face, neck and back of ears should be used”

www.arpansa.gov.au/radiationprotection/Factsheets/is-UVProtection.cfm
- We acknowledge that different children have different ‘internal thermometers’ which effect how they feel in different weather conditions. We will assess signs such as body temperature, appearance eg flushed, sweaty, to support children to add or remove clothing to assist them to be comfortable.

**Shade**
- Children will be encouraged to avoid direct exposure to the sun during the hours of intense ultraviolet radiation (11am - 3pm, during daylight saving time). Staff will direct children to play in shaded areas of the yard during these times.
- The centre has adequate shaded and veranda areas where activities will be set up to minimise direct exposure to the sun.
- Staff will consider if it is appropriate for children to play outside during very hot weather.
- Particular care will be taken to prevent babies from being exposed to sun during hot weather.

**Play Areas**
- Play safe areas are tested by staff frequently during hot weather. Staff will test level of heat by placing hand on surface for the count of ten. The area will be out of bounds if too hot.
- Children will be encouraged to play in shaded and well ventilated areas during hot weather.
- Water play is used appropriately during hot weather eg in a suitable well supervised trough – sandpit is sprayed with water to keep cool.

**Food and Drinks**
- Intake of fluids is monitored and documented in the Babies Room.
- Toddlers will be offered frequent drinks of water throughout the day as well as offered water at all snack and meal times.
- Drinking water is accessible to pre-school children at all times.
- Parents are encouraged to bring water bottles for their children which can be accessed at all times.
- Parents are encouraged to pack food in insulated containers with freezer bricks.
- Each room will provide a cool place to store children’s lunch boxes and drink bottles.

**Curriculum:**
- The Service will incorporate hot weather awareness activities in our teaching programs, featuring songs, rhymes and posters to educate children about the risks related to the heat.

**Parents/Guardians/Caregivers**
- The Service will provide information for parents/carers relating to heat, especially focussing on strategies to prevent heat illness such as sun stroke and dehydration.

Policy developed in consultation with staff and parents.
Ratified at ELC Advisory Committee 18th June 2012.