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Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

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Dear Child Care or Preschool Director/Staff:

It may be shocking to learn that solar radiation [including ultraviolet (UV) rays] is now classified as a “known human carcinogen.” Thus UV rays have joined the ranks of known cancer-causing elements like arsenic, asbestos, radon, and tobacco smoke. In 2007, researchers estimated that there were more new skin cancer cases than the total of all new cases of cancers of the breast, prostate, lung, and colon combined! This fact takes on increased significance as we consider that children tend to be outdoors more often than adults. **Childhood sunburns** are likely increase the risk that children will get melanoma, the most deadly skin cancer, during adulthood. Thus it is vitally important to teach and encourage young children how to reduce unprotected exposure to sunlight.

Especially during the high UV radiation season—March through October— we strongly encourage you to incorporate the enclosed materials into your teaching schedule. Even more important, it is imperative to develop a sun-safety site policy for outdoor play that is based on the enclosed guidelines.

I am pleased to present to you the **Sun-Safety Educational Kit** designed for use with children, three to five years of age. This kit includes:

- *The California Early Childhood Sun Protection Curriculum* and Evaluation
- *Hot Shots* DVD and Activity Packet
- “Alex the Alligator” Poster
- *Guidelines for Outdoor Play* Booklet
- *The ABCDEs of Melanoma* Brochure
- For Parents: Fact Sheet
- Stickers

The curriculum activities will help young children understand both the benefits and hazards of sunlight. They will learn how to protect themselves from overexposure to sunshine. The Parents Fact Sheet and *For Every Child Under the Sun* Brochure along with some of the exercises may be sent home with children so their parent(s) or guardian(s) can participate and support their young one’s adoption of a sun-safe lifestyle.

Please read the curriculum’s introduction called “About This Curriculum” to learn the specifics of using this educational tool. The subsequent section presents the essential background for understanding and preventing skin cancer. It is entitled, “Skin Cancer Prevention (Sun Protection): What a Child Care Provider Needs to Know.”

To support your use of the *Hot Shots* video, please find the *Hot Shots* Activity Packet with the following items enclosed:

- (1) *About Hot Shots*—a description of the video storyline and a list of “teaching points” for staff to understand and share with young viewers.

- (2) A pre- and post- activity to open discussion around sun-safety and evaluate the impact of the video's messages.
- (3) Printed lyrics from the eight songs included on the video. Staff may want to encourage children to sing along as these songs are presented on the video.
- (4) An evaluation form for you to provide feedback.

Once you have implemented the *California Early Childhood Sun Protection Curriculum* and *Hot Shots*, please assist the Skin Cancer Prevention Program by completing and returning both the curriculum and video evaluation forms to the address listed below:

California Skin Cancer Prevention Program
1825 Bell St., Suite 102
Sacramento, CA 95825

Email: cdoc@cdph.ca.gov
Phone: (916) 779-2611
Fax: (916) 779-2608

The enclosed poster features "Alex the Alligator" that should appeal to young children. Alex demonstrates the use of a hat, clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen to lower skin cancer risk. The sun-safety tips listed below Alex serve to remind staff to model and advocate for sun-protective behaviors.

The sun-protection *Guidelines for Outdoor Play* represents a template which child care directors and preschool officials can utilize to create their own site's sun-safety policy to govern child outdoor play. Administrators may go through several cycles of writing, testing, and revising before producing a working policy appropriate for their site's unique circumstances.

Lastly, a copy of the brochure *The ABCDEs of Melanoma* is enclosed to provide additional information about skin cancer prevention and the danger signs of melanoma.

All enclosed instructional items, produced by the California Department of Public Health, may be copied in their entirety for educational purposes and are available to download and print at www.AvoidSkinCancer.com.

Finally, you may be interested in learning the UV Index for your area. The UV Index is a range of numbers from 0 to 11+ that predicts the relative concentration of UV rays bombarding a specified geographical area on a given day. Go to www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html#lookup on the internet and enter the requested information. The corresponding UV Index will be displayed along with an interpretive chart.

To learn more about skin cancer and access additional educational tools (under "Resources") visit the internet at www.AvoidSkinCancer.com. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the SCPP at (916) 779-2611 or by e-mail at cdoc@cdph.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Dawn Nozicka-Ferris, Program Manager
CA Skin Cancer Prevention Program
Comprehensive Cancer Control Program

