



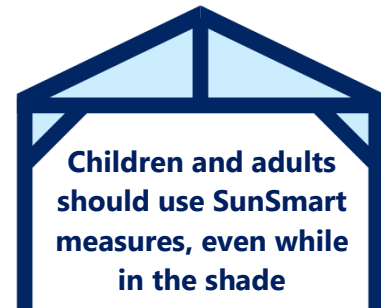
Adapting the outdoor area for heat and UV

Educator Fact Sheet

When seeking to provide more opportunities for outdoor free play, it's important to consider both excessive heat and children's UV exposure. Although heat and UV levels are often linked, they can also be independent. A cool and cloudy day can still have a high UV rating.

Providing a well-designed outdoor space with adequate shade is key to reducing UV exposure and can reduce air temperatures and radiated heat. The NQS Quality Area 3.6 states: services "must ensure adequate shading over areas for both active and passive outdoor play" and "shade must be adequate for the number of children at the service".

This fact sheet provides ideas to reduce heat and increase UV protection in your outdoor space. For additional tips on encouraging outdoor play during hot weather, check out our fact sheet on [Indoor-Outdoor Play in Any Weather](#).



Shade. A planning and design priority that helps prevent skin cancer.

Shade protects us from harmful ultraviolet radiation (UV)

- At least 90% of all skin cancers in Australia, which are the most common cancer, are due to UV damage to the skin.
- UV is most intense in the middle of the day, so shade is most important during this time.

Quality shade can reduce UV exposure by up to 75%

What is quality shade?

Natural shade: trees with canopy that is dense and close to the ground.

Built shade: steel slats, pergolas or solid structures can reduce exposure to shade by the amount of the slats or solid structure, or combined to provide shade when the sun is high in the sky.

Benefits of quality shade and green spaces.

Health benefits	Environmental benefits	Social and economic benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces UV exposure and helps prevent skin cancer • Improves mental health and wellbeing • Encourages physical activity and improves cardiovascular health • Reduces cooling and heating costs • Improves overall health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces air temperature and improves air quality • Reduces noise and improves air quality • Reduces water consumption and improves water quality • Reduces carbon dioxide emissions • Reduces air pollution • Reduces energy consumption • Reduces greenhouse gas emissions • Reduces urban heat island effect • Reduces air pollution • Reduces noise and improves air quality • Reduces water consumption and improves water quality • Reduces carbon dioxide emissions • Reduces air pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves mental health and wellbeing • Encourages physical activity and improves cardiovascular health • Reduces cooling and heating costs • Improves overall health and wellbeing • Reduces air temperature and improves air quality • Reduces noise and improves air quality • Reduces water consumption and improves water quality • Reduces carbon dioxide emissions • Reduces air pollution • Reduces energy consumption • Reduces greenhouse gas emissions • Reduces urban heat island effect • Reduces air pollution

How to plan and design quality shade.

For more information and access to the online resources:

- [Shade a planning and design priority](#)
- [Guidelines to shade](#)
- [The SunSmart Program](#)

NSW Cancer Institute NSW Cancer Council

UV and shade: key considerations and resources

Installing shade is a very effective way to minimise UV exposure.

Built and moveable shade

Several factors influence effective shade planning, both for permanent and temporary structures. These include the quality of the shade cloth, the structure's location in relation to the sun's position, the size and height of the structure, and the presence of surrounding reflective surfaces.

Natural shade

Studies indicate that preschool environments with trees and shrubs not only provide enhanced sun protection during outdoor play but also encourage more physical activity. Consider incorporating trees into your shade plans. For guidance on tree selection, consult your local council or Landcare group.

Resources

The Cancer Council has a number of resources that provide guidance for Early Childhood services planning to increase outdoor shade:

- [Shade a planning and design priority](#): An infographic outlining the benefits to shade and basic considerations (pictured on left).
- [Guidelines to shade](#): provides tips on conducting a shade audit, selecting shade materials and designing a shade plan.
- [The SunSmart Program](#): resources for Early Childhood services including online learning for Educators.



'The heart of a child'
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Lara Went

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Creating a cooler outdoor environment

Having good shade at your service won't always be enough to reduce the heat. Consider these factors when adapting the outdoor environment for better heat management and outdoor play.

Surfaces: Material, colour and location of surfaces can greatly affect the heat to the surrounding area.

- Concrete, asphalt, sand and dark-coloured plastics and rubbers can get extremely hot. If possible, add shade over these areas, or replace with grass and vegetation. Light-coloured artificial surfaces won't retain as much heat.
- Cool hot surfaces with water, but consider local water restrictions.
- Reduce heat reflection off fences and exterior walls by using green vertical gardens or bamboo screens.

Air flow: Airflow and natural breezes can help cool the outdoor area, especially in humid environments.

- Relocate any moveable objects blocking natural airflow.
- Orientate the openings of shade structures towards incoming breezes.
- Consider installing outdoor ceiling fans under a deck or pergola.
- Add eaves to the design of built shade to cool the space immediately outside the shade structure. This will further reduce heat in the shaded area.

Think about other cooling mechanisms to alleviate the heat on hot days. Complete a thorough risk assessment before installing new equipment.



Tips for raising funds

Ideas to help with the cost of equipment or infrastructure to reduce the heat in your outdoor play space:

- **Grants:** search online for grant opportunities such as on the [Early Childhood Australia](#) webpage.
- **Fundraising** can be a fun and engaging way for children and families to contribute to improvement projects within your service's outdoor environment. For ideas on how to fundraise, take a look at the [Healthy Fundraising Guide](#) from the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.
- **Crowdfunding:** if your service is engaged within your local community and has a group of loyal followers, crowdfunding may be an effective option.

Consider seeking help from enthusiastic families or community members who have experience in grant writing or fundraising activities. Alternatively, consider hiring a professional grant writer.



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