

# National Program for Playground Safety

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## Tips for Limiting Sun Exposure

Because manmade materials aren't the only hazards we need to be concerned about, these easy, preventative steps can help you keep children safe from an unavoidable natural one.

### Avoid peak sun intensity hours.

This is an ideal strategy for limiting time in the sun. As the sun moves higher in the sky, the sun's rays become more intense and damaging to the skin and eyes. This is because the ultraviolet (UV) light travels a shorter, more direct distance to reach the Earth.

The peak sun intensity hours, when UV light is strongest, are between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. standard time or 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. daylight savings time. When possible, plan children's outdoor activities for early morning or late afternoon when the sun's rays are less intense. By avoiding sun exposure during peak hours, sun exposure may be reduced by as much as 60%.

If outdoor activities during these peak times are unavoidable, encourage the use of protective clothing and sunglasses, suggest playing in shaded areas, and, of course, always use sunscreen.

### Provide adequate shade.

Shade can help protect children from the sun, but not all shade is created equal. The quality of shade an object provides depends on the sun's position in the sky, the size of the object making the shadow, and how much sunlight can penetrate the object.

Look at the size of the shadow (shade) that an object, such as a tree or building, provides at different times of the day. Shade is related to peak sun intensity hours. When the sun is low in the sky, the rays hitting an object make longer, larger shadows. When the sun is high in the sky, during peak sun intensity hours, shade areas are usually small. The best time to find large areas of shade is early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

### Quick tips

- Schedule outdoor activities before 10 a.m. and after 3 p.m. (standard time) or before 11 a.m. and after 4 p.m. (daylight savings time).
- Monitor the daily UV Index forecasts for your area (at <http://www.epa.gov/> or in newspapers) and plan indoor activities on days of high sun intensity.
- Teach children how to identify and find good sources of shade.
- Keep infants and small children in the shade when outdoors.

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NPPS is the premier playground safety non-profit organization in the United States. NPPS serves as a national resource for the latest educational and research information on playground safety.

- Plan trips to parks and places where adequate shade is available.
- Plant trees that provide maximum shade on school or child care center property.
- Purchase portable shade structures such as umbrellas, tents and tarps.
- Build permanent shade structures such as porches, picnic shelters and fabric shade canopies.
- Include shade covering in the design of playground equipment and recreational areas.

**Sources:** AMC Cancer Research Center (<http://www.amc.org/>)

American Sun Protection Association

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