

York Region Community and Health Services Sun Safety Program for Elementary Schools

Rationale:

According to the Canadian Dermatology Association (2009), 1 in 6 children born today will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. In fact, a significant part of their lifetime exposure to the sun will occur before a child reaches the age of 18 (Canadian Cancer Society, 2005). One severe sunburn during childhood can double the risk of developing skin cancer later in life (Canadian Dermatology Association-Sun Facts).

By encouraging children to be sun safe when they are young, children are more likely to adopt and maintain sun safe behaviours as adults.

Purpose:

The Sun Safety Program for Elementary Schools focuses on the prevention of skin cancer for students, parents, teachers and administrators through education and awareness, healthy physical environments, supportive social environments and community partnerships.

Services:

The Sun Safety Program for Elementary Schools provides consultation, support, resources and curriculum-matched materials to assist in the promotion of sun safety practices. This includes planning for the use of shade in elementary schools.

Available services and resources for elementary schools include:

- Fact sheets, pamphlets, posters, bookmarks and banners
- Newsletter inserts
- Annual Sun Smart Poster Contest for grade 1 students
- Consultation and support on how to plan sun safe events and how to plan for shade
- Consultation and support to develop and implement a sun safety policy or guidelines for students and staff
- Consultation and support to Healthy Schools that choose to address sun safety using a comprehensive school health approach

For more information and resources on sun safety for elementary schools, please call York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653.