



## *Come Grow with Us*

**Health education and resource information for child care providers**



### **Promoting Sun Safety in Your Child Care Centre**

According to the Canadian Dermatology Association (2009), the most harmful effects of sun exposure occur during early childhood. In fact, two or more sunburns during childhood doubles the risk of developing skin cancer later in life (Health Canada, 2003). The Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Dermatology Association both identify the use of shade as a key strategy to reduce the risk of developing skin cancer.

Seeking shade, wearing protective clothing, hats and sunscreen are essential elements of sun protection. Shade from trees, buildings, umbrellas, awnings, canopies or gazebos are effective strategies to reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

Consider the outdoor play areas at your facility and on outings:

- Are there shaded areas for play? Do you encourage play in shaded areas?
- Is shade available from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. when ultraviolet radiation from the sun is the strongest?
- Is your play area on grass or concrete? Surfaces such as concrete, sand and water reflect higher levels of ultraviolet radiation than surfaces such as grass, wood or soil.
- Do you take along portable shade (e.g., umbrellas) when on outings?

Child care centres can promote sun safety and the use of shade by:

- Integrating sun safety education into your centre activities
- Initiating a project to add shade to your child care centre yard/play area

York Region Community and Health Services offers support and resources to assist child care centres to promote sun safety and plan for shade.

For more information and resources on sun safety and planning for shade, call: York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653.





### **Kids on board. It's a smoke-free zone.**

Compelling evidence, health officials lobbying and public support has led to the amendment of the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* to prohibit smoking in a vehicle carrying children under the age of 16. As of January 21, 2009, any Ontarian who is smoking or holding lit tobacco in a vehicle while a child is present can be charged by police. Although the maximum fine is only \$250, voluntary compliance is the primary objective.

The aim is to protect children from the harmful effects of exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS). SHS can be at least 27 times more toxic in a vehicle than a home because of the smaller space. Opening vehicle windows does not eliminate the risk. SHS contains the same 4,000 chemicals as first-hand smoke, such as tar, arsenic, acetone and ammonia, with some of the chemicals in higher concentrations.

Children are especially vulnerable to SHS because their bodies are still developing. They breathe more air relative to body weight and metabolize the SHS toxins faster than adults. Exposure to SHS can result in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), asthma, ear infections, cognitive and behavioural issues, and adult onset cancers.

Caregivers can share these tips to help parents to make their vehicle a smoke-free zone:

- Replace smoking with alternatives like chewing gum, drinking water or singing to music
- Help reduce cravings by removing lighters and filling the ashtray with other items
- Plan for breaks on long trips to allow smokers to leave the vehicle (keep children's safety in mind)
- Keep umbrellas and warmer jackets in the vehicle for smokers in case of bad weather
- Advise passengers that the vehicle is a smoke-free zone when children are present

For free information or confidential support to quit smoking smokers can call the *Smoker's Helpline* at 1-877-513-5333 or visit [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca). Child care facilities can request a *Thanx Mom or Dad for the smoke-free ride* poster through York Region, *Health Connection* 1-800-361-5653.



For more information, please call  
**Health Connection** at