

Planning for Shade in Your School

According to the Canadian Cancer Society (2001), 1 in 7 children born today will develop skin cancer during 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), and one severe sunburn during childhood can double the risk of developing skin cancer later in life (Canadian Dermatology Association - Sun Facts).

Protecting children from the harmful effects of the sun can greatly reduce their lifetime risk of developing skin cancer. In addition to sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, and protective clothing, seeking and providing shade are essential components of a comprehensive approach to sun safety.

Schools can promote sun safety and the use of shade by:

- Integrating sun safety education into the curriculum
- Initiating a project to add shade to your school yard. Involve your school and/or parent council in tree planting programs and other shade creating opportunities

To plan for shade it is essential to follow several planning steps. The benefits of following a shade planning process include:

- Addressing the unique environment of each individual school
- Building a sense of community within the school
- Establishing links to the curriculum
- Providing enhanced learning opportunities for teachers and students

We offer support, resources and curriculum materials to assist schools to plan for shade.

Resources to plan for shade include:

- *Shade: A Planning Guide* by the York Region Sunsense Coalition
- *Designing for Shade and Energy Conservation – School Ground Greening Guide* Module of York University's Ecoschool Program

Sun safety Curriculum Resources:

- *Living with Sunshine* for grades 1, 2 and 3 by the Canadian Cancer Society
- *UV Radiation: Science, Sun Protection and the Classroom* for grades 1 to 8 by the Ontario Sun Safety Working Group
- *Sun Savvy Club* by Environment Canada
- *Skywatchers* by Environment Canada

Promote your school as a sun safe school – let your school be a role model to promote sun safety and the use of shade.

For more information and resources on sun safety or to start a shade project in your school, call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.

