

Fun in the Sun!

A Lesson on Summer Safety

Playgroup #10

Materials Needed

- A blank sheet of paper for each member of your playgroup.
- A pen or pencil for each member of your playgroup.

Handouts

- Play it Safe in the Sun
- “Fun in the Sun!” lyrics

Introduction

Scenario:

Jane has been excited all summer for the 10th Annual Smith Family Reunion. She is especially excited this year since it is Jake’s (12 months old) first family reunion. She can’t wait to see Jake playing in the grass and splashing around in Aunt Sally’s huge swimming pool. The weather is just perfect for July – mid-80s and not a cloud in the sky! It’s even going to cool off a bit in the evening making the conditions just right for a campfire at dusk; that is, as long as the mosquitoes aren’t too bad. This family reunion is going to be a blast!

Activity:

Have the mothers get in groups of two. Give each group a piece of scratch paper and have them write down ways that Jane can keep Jake safe at the family reunion (e.g. pool safety, sun screen, bug repellent, keeping him away from the fire, etc.). After a few minutes have each group share ideas with the entire group.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Understand the risks associated with summertime for children
- Understand the different steps to take to protect your child from the sun, pools, and bugs
- Know how to apply both sunscreen and DEET to children

Sun Safety

While playing in the sun is fun and exciting for your child, it is up to you as the parent to protect your child from the harmful effects of the sun. Between 60 and 80% of a person’s sun exposure occurs before the age of 18 because children spend so much more time outdoors. This early exposure to the sun contributes to your child’s risk of developing skin cancer later in life. In fact, research has shown that two or more blistering sunburns as a child or teen increases your risk of

developing skin cancer as an adult. Sun exposure can also lead to wrinkled skin, sun spots, and cataracts of the eyes.

Sun exposure has immediate consequences as well. Sunburns hurt and can cause dehydration and fever.

Babies under 6 months of age are especially susceptible to sunburn. Babies' skin is more sensitive and thinner than adults. Darker skinned babies are also more prone to sunburn. Here are some helpful tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (n.d) to help protect your baby from the sun:

- Keep babies under 6 months of age out of the direct sun. Place them in the shade, under a tree, or under a stroller canopy.
- Shield your child from the sun with clothing – lightweight long pants, a long-sleeve shirt, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Contact your pediatrician if your child is under the age of 1 and gets a sun burn. Severe sunburns are an emergency.
- If you cannot shade your baby from the sun, apply limited amounts of sunscreen. Apply minimal amounts of at least SPF 15 sunscreen to small areas, such as the face and neck.

Children 1 year old and older:

- Use sunscreen that is made for children and preferably waterproof. Before applying sunscreen, check a small area for a reaction. Be careful applying sunscreen around the eyes, avoiding the eyelids. If a rash develops, talk to your pediatrician.
- Select clothes made of tightly woven fabric, such as cotton. If you are unsure if a piece of clothing is woven tightly, hold it up to the light. The less light the shines through, the tighter the weave.
- When using caps, make sure the bill is facing forward to protect your child's face. Sunglasses with UV protection can be used to protect your child's eyes.

Other useful sun safety tips:

- The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- The sun's rays can go through clouds so be sure to use protection even on cloudy days.
- Use sunscreens that say "broad spectrum." This means it blocks out both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use waterproof sunscreens. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours.
- Use a sunscreen with at least SPF 15. Apply 30 minutes before going outdoors to allow it to work on the skin.
- Rub sunscreen in well. Cover all exposed areas, especially the face, nose, ears, feet, hands, and backs of the knees.
- Keep your child out of the sun until sunburn completely heals.
- Sunscreens should be used as protection, not as a reason to stay in the sun longer.

Pool Safety

Pools are extremely dangerous for young children. If at all possible, avoid having a pool in your yard until your child is at least 5 years old. Accidental drowning usually occurs because a child wanders out of the house and falls into the pool. Teaching a child to swim does not eliminate the risk of drowning. Supervision is the key to prevention.

American Academy of Pediatrics (1994) Pool safety tips:

- NEVER leave your child alone near a pool. Children should always be supervised by an adult who knows CPR.
- Put up a fence that is at least 4 feet high on all 4 sides of the pool to separate your house and playing areas from the pool. Use gates that self-close and self-latch, with the latch out of reach of your child.
- Keep rescue equipment (e.g. shepherd's hook and life preservers) and a phone near the pool.
- Do not use air-filled swimming aids as a substitute for a life preserver.
- Remove all toys from the pool after use to help eliminate the risk of a child trying to get the toy.
- Secure the pool after use.

Bug Safety

Bugs are often harmless, but sometimes a bite or sting can be life threatening. Children may suffer from an allergic reaction when stung by a wasp or bee. Other insects, such as mosquitoes and ticks, are able to transmit disease. Mosquitoes carry diseases such as West Nile Virus and ticks can transmit Lyme Disease or Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2007) recommends the following bug safety tips.

- Avoid scented soaps, perfumes, or hairsprays.
- Avoid areas that attract bugs such as stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods, and gardens with blooming flowers.
- Avoid brightly colored or flowery printed clothing.
- Remove a visible stinger from the skin by gently scraping it off horizontally with a credit card or your finger nail.
- Avoid sunscreen/insect repellent combinations. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours but insect repellent should not be reapplied.
- Insect repellents containing DEET are most effective against ticks and mosquitoes.
- The maximum concentration of DEET recommended for children is 30%. Do not use DEET on children under 2 months of age.

The AAP Committee on Environmental Health (2003) lists the following precautions when using DEET:

- Only apply sparingly to exposed skin, NOT under clothing.
- Do not use on the hands of young children. Avoid applying to areas around the eyes and mouth.

- Do not apply over cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- Wash skin that has been treated with DEET with soap and water upon returning indoors. Wash treated clothing.
- **Do not spray in enclosed areas or around food.**

Activity

Give each mom a copy of the song “Fun in the Sun!” As a group, sing the song to the tune of “Happy Birthday.” Encourage the children to sing along if they can. The song should be used to remind mothers and children how to be safe in the summer. To save time, you may choose to just sing the bolded verses. Encourage the mothers in your group to come up with their own creative ways to remind their children how to be safe.

Fun in the Sun!

Having fun in the sun
Having fun in the sun
Mommy puts on my sunscreen
Having fun in the sun

Splashing around in the pool
 Splashing around in the pool
 Never swim alone
 Splashing around in the pool

Having fun in the sun
 Having fun in the sun
 Gotta put on my hat
 Having fun in the sun

Splashing around in the pool
 Splashing around in the pool
 Put the toys away
 Splashing around in the pool

Having fun in the sun
 Having fun in the sun
 Don't forget my sun glasses
 Having fun in the sun

Splashing around in the pool
 Splashing around in the pool
 Keep the gate locked tight
 Splashing around in the pool

Having fun in the sun
 Having fun in the sun
 Let's play in the shade
 Having fun in the sun

Playing in the grass
Playing in the grass
Mommy puts on my bug spray
Playing in the grass

Splashing around in the pool
Splashing around in the pool
Mommy puts on my life vest
Splashing around in the pool

Playing in the grass
 Playing in the grass
 Stay away from the bees
 Playing in the grass

Suggested Reading

Blue Bug's Safety Book
 By Virginia Poulet

Dinosaurs, Beware! A Safety Guide

By Marc Brown and Stephen Drensky

Mike Swan, Sink or Swim

By Deborah Heiligman

References

AAP Committee on Environmental Health (2003). Follow safety precautions when using DEET on children. *AAP News*. Retrieved on September 12, 2007, from <http://aapnews.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/e200399v1>

American Academy of Pediatrics (n.d.). *Protecting your child from the sun*. Retrieved on September 12, 2007, from <http://www.aap.org/family/protectsun.htm>

American Academy of Pediatrics (1994). *TIPP: Pool safety for children*. Retrieved on September 12, 2007, from <http://www.aap.org/family/tippool.htm>

American Academy of Pediatrics (2007). *Summer safety tips - Part I*. Retrieved on September 12, 2007, from <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/summertips.htm>