Sun Safety for Kids in Five Easy Steps

Pre-reading
Questions:
- Did you know that the sun can damage your skin?
- Do you know how to protect your children from the sun?

Definitions:
- Estimate – to form an opinion by reasoning
- Primary – main, or of greatest importance
- Exposure – to leave open, without protection
- Risk – a chance of loss or harm
- Reflect – to turn or throw back
- Brim – an edge or rim of a hat

Reading

It is important to protect kids from the sun’s harmful rays as too much sun can cause skin cancer later in life. Sunlight consists of two types of ultra violet rays – UVA rays and UVB rays. The UVB rays are the sun’s burning rays (which are blocked by window glass) and are the primary cause of sunburn and skin cancer.

The Skin Cancer Foundation estimates that 80% of your lifetime exposure to the sun occurs during childhood or before the age of 18. It only takes one blistering sunburn to double the risk of getting melanoma, a skin cancer, later in life. Protect yourself and your children from skin cancer by following these five easy steps:

1. Limit outdoor playtime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun’s rays are the strongest. If children must be outside, protect them with sunscreen. Be careful around reflective surfaces, like water and sand, which can reflect up to 85 percent of the sun’s damaging rays.

2. Use and apply sunscreen properly. Sunscreen is a lotion or spray that protects your skin from the sun. Look for a Sun Protection Factor or SPF number of 15 or higher. The higher the SPF number, the better the protection. Children who sunburn easily should use a SPF of 30 or greater. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before your child goes out in the sun. Cover the entire body including the nose, ears, hands, feet and behind the neck. Lips can also burn, so apply a lip balm with an SPF of 15 or greater. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after sweating or swimming.

3. Cover up. Wearing protective clothing can also protect your children from the sun. Wear long sleeve shirts and pants. Don’t forget a wide brim hat to protect their head and neck areas. Sunglasses with “UV protection” should also be worn to protect eyes. A sun umbrella is another good way to protect children from the sun.

4. Be careful with medications as some medications increase the skin’s sensitivity to the sun, so the skin burns easier. Make sure you ask your doctor how the sun will react to any medications your child is taking.

5. Set a good example for your kids. If your kids see you following sun safety rules, they will do the same. Skin protection is important for everyone!

Adapted from Child.com, photos courtesy of www.sungrubbies.com and the Good Samaritan Foundation, Lexington, KY
Understanding

1. What clothing items can you wear to protect your child and yourself from the sun? ____________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

2. If your kids see you following sun safety rules, what will they do? ____________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

3. It is important that everyone protect themselves from the sun; but why is it especially important for
   children to be protected? __________________________ ________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

4. What time of the day are the sun’s rays the strongest? ______________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

5. What does the word sensitivity/sensitive mean?__________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

6. What does SPF stand for?______________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

7. What is melanoma? ______________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

8. Why are there different SPF numbers on sunscreens? _________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

Writing

Option A: Tell how you protect yourself and your children from the sun.

Option B: In your own words, summarize what you know about protecting yourself and your child
from the sun.

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