



Set Expectations

Create a social story, read a book, or use visual aids to **teach your child the importance of sunscreen** and how it keeps skin "healthy" & and "safe" from the sun.

Casually talk about sunscreen during bedtime, dinner, or driving. Never spring the application process on your child in a rush or last minute; connect with them and slowly prepare them.

Apply your own sunscreen in front of your child, ask child to help you apply your sunscreen, or have them apply it to a doll/animal. This **gives them control and exposure**.

Expectation of Time: "By the count of x" we will be done applying the sunscreen or "by the end of singing the ABCs/favorite song we will be finished."

Read more below for ideas on how to **create a routine that works for you** and your individual child!



Sensory Investigation

Investigate your child's unique sensory needs - where are they having challenges?

Is your sunscreen smelly, greasy, clumpy, cold? Warm sunscreen up with your hands, avoid scents.

Trial various types of sunscreens: spray, sunscreen face stick, and powder. Lotions will most likely be the most challenging due to needing hands to spread it onto the skin.

Allow child to smell and feel sunscreen before application.

Try rubbing a nice smelling chapstick on the tip of your child's nose to override unpleasant smells.



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Get Sensory



Insure your child is fed, calm, and **regulated before application.**

Have your child **engage in deep proprioceptive input** (heavy work) before application to help inhibit tactile sensitivity. This provides calm, regulating, and organizing input to their nervous system.

Heavy Work Examples: animals walks, stomping feet, roll up child in towel burrito, pull a weighted wagon, carry heavy items - any activity where the muscles, joints, & tendons are being pushed, pulled, flexed, stretched & pressed.

Apply lotion with **firm rhythmic strokes for a more calming** sensory application, as though you were hugging their arms, legs, and back.

Trial **applying in front of mirror** to include the visual sense for a greater feeling of control/predictability. Play a fun song or relaxing music during your routine.



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Accommodations

Try a loose fitted sun hat : Pick out a special sun hat with your child that includes their favorite character or style – collaborate and give choices.

Try a sun shirt : Pick out a special sun shirt with your child that includes their favorite character or style – collaborate and give choices. Be mindful sun shirts may feel more cold when wet.

Try a wet suit : A wet suit can protect the skin, keep your child warmer in cold water and also give a feeling of being being hugged – calming proprioceptive input.

Bring a large umbrella or beach tent so children can take a break from wearing a hat or sun shirt. This may help regulate your child before the need to reapply sunscreen.

Ensure **sun shirt has proper amount of SPF.** Check out @swimzip with UPF 50+, blocks 98% of harmful rays – started by a local Boise mom of 3 with skin cancer.



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Don't Forget ...

Do your best to start these routines early with your children so they become habits into adulthood.

Empower your child by collaborating with them and **giving them choices and independence** when possible – "Should we start with your arms or legs?"

Bring the Fun! Play or sing a fun summer song, paint on sunscreen "freckles", "polka dots", "angel kisses", "tiger stripes," or "fairy wings."

Create a rhythm and do your best to stick with it. Allow it to change as your child grows – things that did not work in the past may suddenly work as their sensory system becomes more integrated.

Tactile Defensiveness is unique to each child due to the way the brain processes sensory information. Investigate and trial what will work best for your individual child. Start with connecting with your child.



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