

Targeting 2-6 year old children for primary prevention of skin cancer will minimize sun damage and may foster lifelong sun-protective behaviors that will reduce the likelihood of developing skin cancer, especially melanoma. Parental beliefs about and involvement in sun protection are important components of successful skin cancer prevention programs for children, especially young children. Parents control family resources and activities and the availability of sunscreen and protective clothing.

This multicomponent sun protection program is feasible for family practice and pediatric clinicians to introduce during well-child visits of 2-6 year old children. Since sun protection is one of the recommended anticipatory guidance points of the Bright Futures program of the American Academy of Pediatrics, this multicomponent sun protection program builds upon care that is intended to be provided by all pediatricians. In climates with four seasons, it is best to offer the read-along book during months when it is warm (April – August). In climates with warm weather all year, the book may be provided all year.

At the time of the well child visit for vaccinations, many pediatricians offer small books to children to promote reading. The read-along book for this program can be stocked in the same cabinet as the small books for children and distributed by office staff to the child while waiting for the vaccination to be given.

Weekly text message reminders are sent to the caregivers mobile phone. Electronic messaging is a powerful medium for communicating health information to underserved populations. Text messages may be programmed to be sent to caregivers via the electronic medical record or a text messaging service will do this. The text messages and possible responses are:

1. Did you receive the book? Did you read the book with your child? Yes No
2. During the past week, did your child regularly wear a hat for sun protection? Yes No
3. During the past week, did your child regularly wear a swim shirt for sun protection? Yes No
4. In the past week, did your child get a sunburn or skin irritation from the sun on even a small part of the skin? Yes No