



Strategies for Teaching Sun Safety Skills to Children with Autism



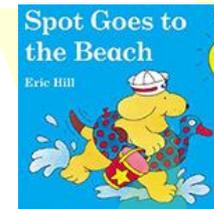
Establish motivation

Use First-Then to increase motivation for applying sun safety strategy



Incorporate favorite characters into sun safety practices

When sun safety is paired with existing reinforcers (e.g. music, favorite characters, special treats) the activity itself may become it's own reward.



Give choices to help the child exert control

Giving kids with autism some control over how they will complete a non-preferred activity is key to promoting cooperation.



Lotion or spray?



Start with arms or legs?



I do it or you do it?



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Teach incrementally

Start with short activities/easy requests, such as hat on for 1 minute, or sunscreen on feet only. Increase the difficulty of the demand only after success at the current step has been achieved.





Offer alternatives to hats and glasses while building those skills

Create a shady spot or "cubby" for time out from the sun. Use blankets or towels to make a fort; supply with drinks and fun activities



Use visual supports to add meaning to your words.

Children with autism tend to have strong visual processing skills. The use of visual supports (pictures, symbols, objects, etc.) allows for multiple ways of understanding settings and expectations.

THE SUNSCREEN SONG
 Put on your sunscreen,
 Summer time is HOT!
 Put on your sunscreen.
 Don't miss a single spot.

Face, neck, and legs,
 And back and chest and arms.

If you don't want a sunburn
 Put your sunscreen on!

Sunscreen Check-Off!



Too Hot	Too Bright
pool	glasses
fan	hat
drink	shade



REWARD SUCCESSES, BIG AND SMALL

Reinforcement is the most effective way to increase desired behaviors in children with autism (as opposed to punishment, which leads to frustration and doesn't teach appropriate behavior.) Setting small, achievable goals and being prepared with the necessary supports will make it possible for your child to respond correctly and receive reinforcement. **Behavior that is rewarded is repeated!**



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