MISSION: SUNWISE

About the SunWise Program

To promote sun-safe behavior at an early age, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed the SunWise Program, a free national environmental and health education program for children. Through the use of classroom, school, and community components, SunWise promotes sun safety by teaching children and their caregivers how to protect themselves from overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

The program is designed for kindergarten through eighth-grade learning levels. Any K-8 school can participate.

By joining EPA's SunWise Program, participants will have access to useful tools to help teach sun-safe behaviors in the classroom, such as:

- The SunWise Tool Kit — providing a range of cross-curricular lessons, activities, and background information for K-8 children.
- The SunWise Internet Learning Site (**www.epa.gov/sunwise**) — an interactive medium with web-based educational activities and resources.
- Additional materials, puzzles, posters, and activities, such as the "Mission SunWise" storybook and activity book.

Register today to receive your free SunWise Tool Kit by visiting **www.epa.gov/sunwise**.

"Welcome to the **SunWise Club**," said Amy.

"Everybody, meet Carlos and Lisa. They're new to the neighborhood. They want to join our club," said Kelly.

"They heard the SunWise Club has fun being sun safe," said Erin.

"We do have fun! We have secret missions and adventures," said Brian. "When we finish a mission we get awesome rewards."

"What's our secret mission for today?" asked Sam.

"Today our mission is to help Carlos and Lisa become SunWise. When they're SunWise, we'll get our prize!" said Amy.

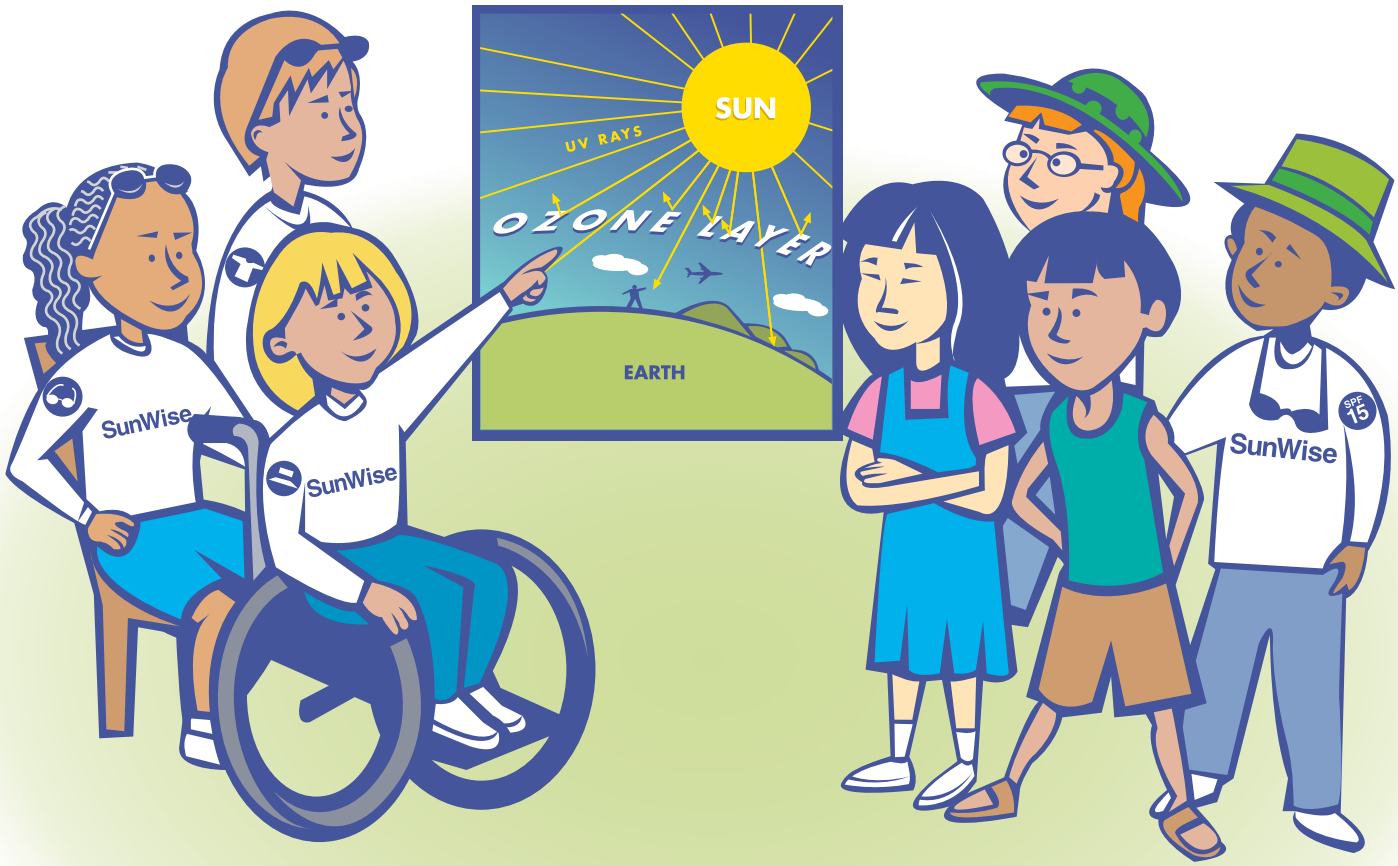
"Why should I be SunWise?" asked Lisa.

"The sun is a star," said Kelly. "It does many good things that help plants and animals on Earth."

"The sun gives light so we can see, it keeps us warm, and it helps plants grow."

"Even though we need the sun, sometimes too much sunlight can be bad for people."

"We must protect ourselves from special rays of the sun called **ULTRAVIOLET RAYS**. Ultraviolet rays are also called **UV RAYS**."



"That's right!" said Amy, "You can't see or feel UV rays, but they are there, even on cloudy days. UV rays can hurt your skin and eyes. It doesn't matter if your skin is light or dark. UV rays can cause you harm."

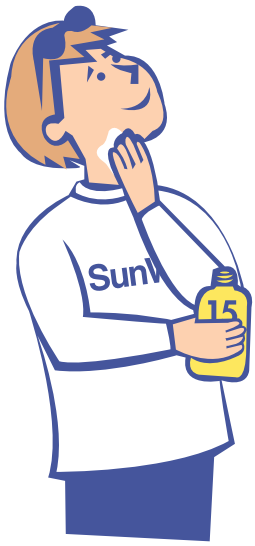
"The sky has a built-in shield called the **OZONE LAYER**. The ozone layer keeps most of the UV rays from reaching the Earth. It is like an umbrella that blocks the rain. The ozone layer does not stop ALL the UV rays from reaching you. That's why it is important that we protect ourselves and be SunWise."

"UV rays are strongest in the middle of the day. It's a good idea to stay out of the sun during that time if you can – ESPECIALLY if you're not SunWise."

"OK," Carlos said, "Now I know WHY I need sun protection. But what can I do to be SunWise? How can I protect myself from UV rays?"

"It's easy!" said Kelly. You just need to remember to **SLIP! SLOP! SLAP!** and **WRAP!,™ CHECK the UV INDEX!** and **PLAY in the SHADE**!"

"**SLIP** on a shirt. Wear a long-sleeve shirt and pants to cover as much skin on your body as you can," said Amy.

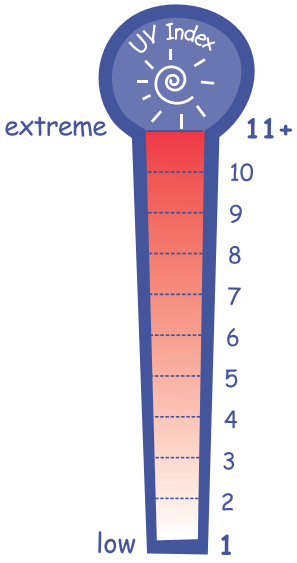


"**SLOP** on a sunscreen of at least SPF 15. Spread it on your face, arms, legs, and any other skin that the sun's UV rays can reach," said Sam. "Remember to reapply."

"**SLAP** on the right kind of hat. A good hat will keep UV rays from reaching your face, ears, and back of your neck," said Brian.

"For each SunWise step you take, you earn a badge. If you earn enough badges, you can join our club," said Kelly. "We'll help you!"

"**WRAP** on some sunglasses. Sunglasses protect your eyes," said Kelly.



"**CHECK the UV INDEX**. We'll show you how! The UV Index will tell you how strong the UV rays are," said Sam.

"And **PLAY in the SHADE**. If you're in the shade, you're protected from some of the UV rays," said Erin.

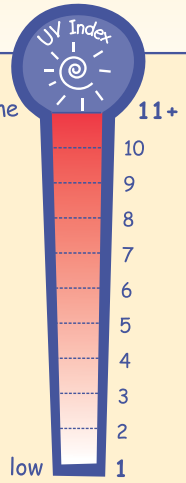
"Before we go outside, it's important to **CHECK the UV Index**," said Brian.

"What's the UV Index?" asked Lisa.

"The UV Index is a prediction of how strong the UV rays will be," said Amy. "Just like we can check to see if it is going to rain or snow, we can check the forecast for UV rays. The UV Index is reported on a scale of 1-11+. The higher the number, the stronger the UV rays reaching Earth, and the more sun protection we need."

UV Index

Index Number	Exposure Level
2 or Less	Low
3–5	Moderate
6–7	High
8–10	Very High
11+	Extreme



The higher the UV Index, the more important it is to be SunWise.

"You can find the UV Index in many places. It's in the weather section of the newspaper and on TV and radio weather reports. You can also find it on the SunWise website at **www.epa.gov/sunwise**."

"You can earn a SunWise badge by **CHECKING the UV Index** every day," Brian added.

"How's this?" Carlos asked. "Is this SunWise?"

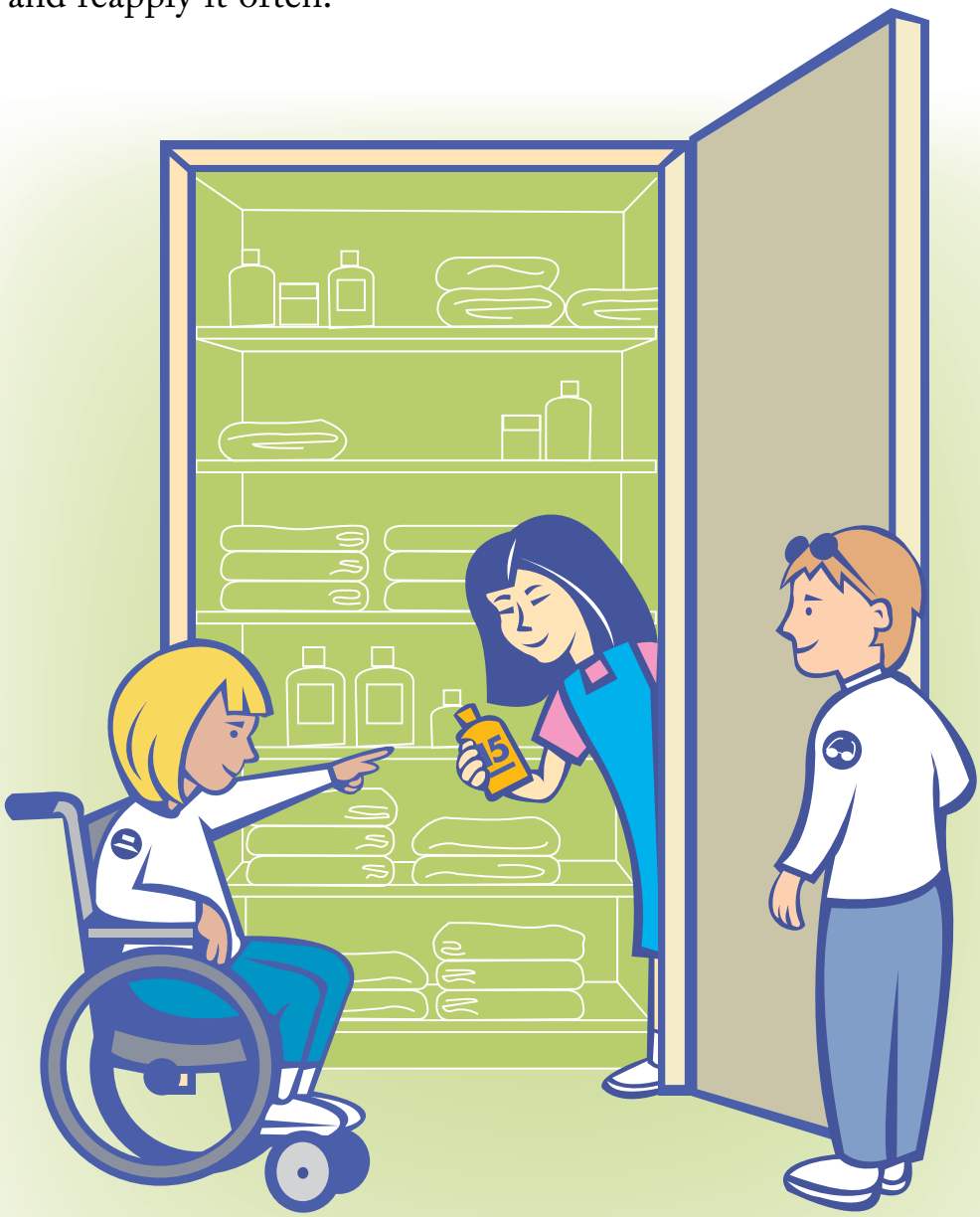
"That's OK," said Amy, "but **THIS ONE** is better."

Remember, cover as much skin as possible to be SunWise. What other clothes are the most SunWise?

"Time to **SLOP** on some sunscreen," said Kelly.

"Here's some! This is what my mom uses. What does this number '15' mean?" asked Lisa.

"The numbers tell you how much protection that sunscreen will give you," Sam said. "You should always use number 15 or higher. **SLOPPING** on sunscreen will help protect your skin from UV rays. Remember to **SLOP** on a lot and reapply it often."



"Time to **SLAP** on a hat and **WRAP** on some sunglasses. Which hat should I wear?" asked Carlos.

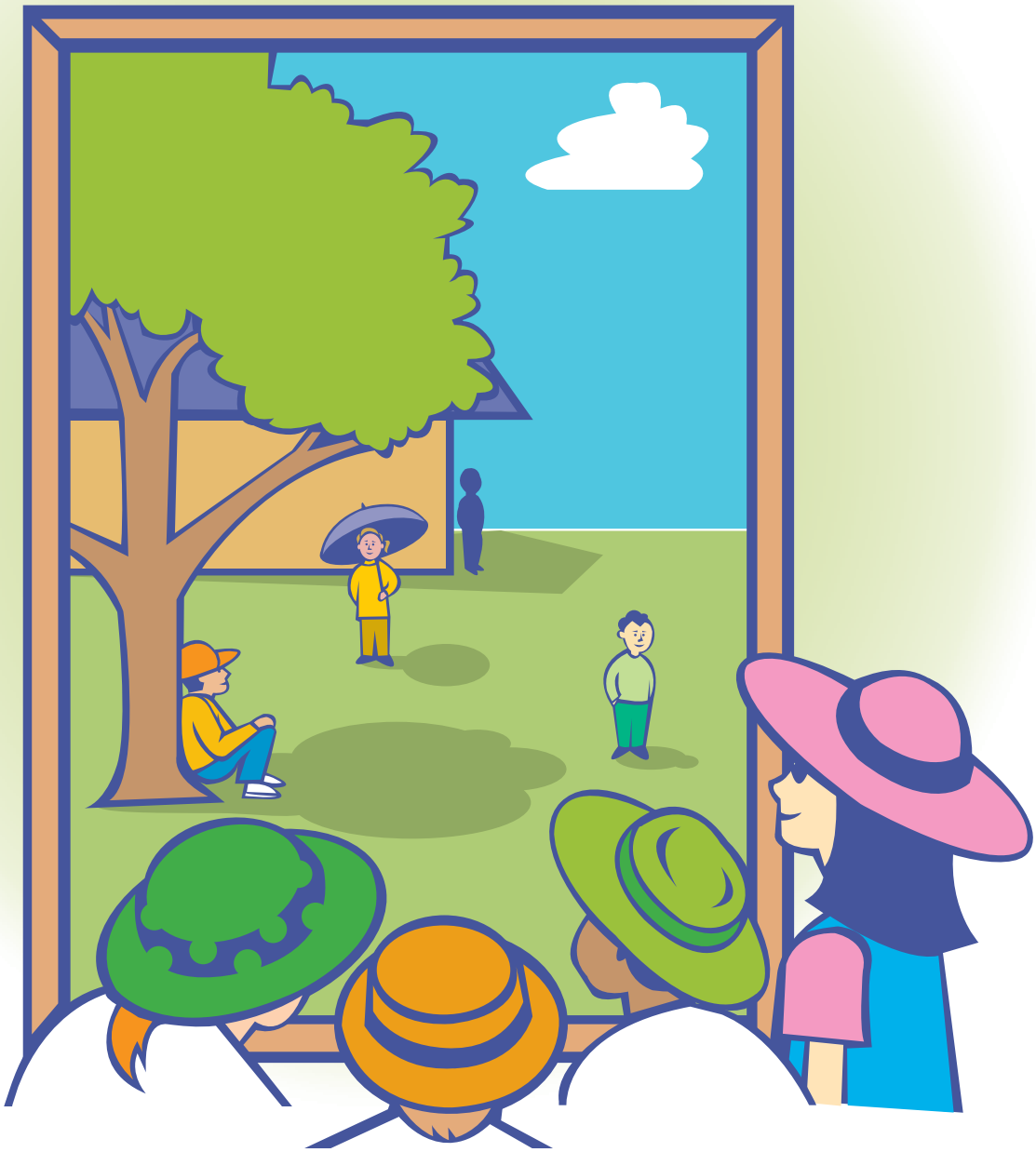
"Pick one that blocks the most sun from your head, face, and neck," said Kelly.

Which hat do YOU think is the most SunWise?

"When you are outside, try to **PLAY in the SHADE**," said Sam.

"You know one way to tell when the sun's rays are strong?" Kelly asked. "It's when your shadow is shorter than your body."

"Can you find the shady places in this picture?" asked Erin. "You can earn a badge by finding all the shady places to play."



"OK, Lisa and Carlos, how SunWise are you? How many badges have you earned?" asked Brian.

"We each earned SIX badges!" said Lisa.

"We **SLIPPED** on long shirts and pants,

We **SLOPPED** on sunscreen,

We **SLAPPED** on good hats,

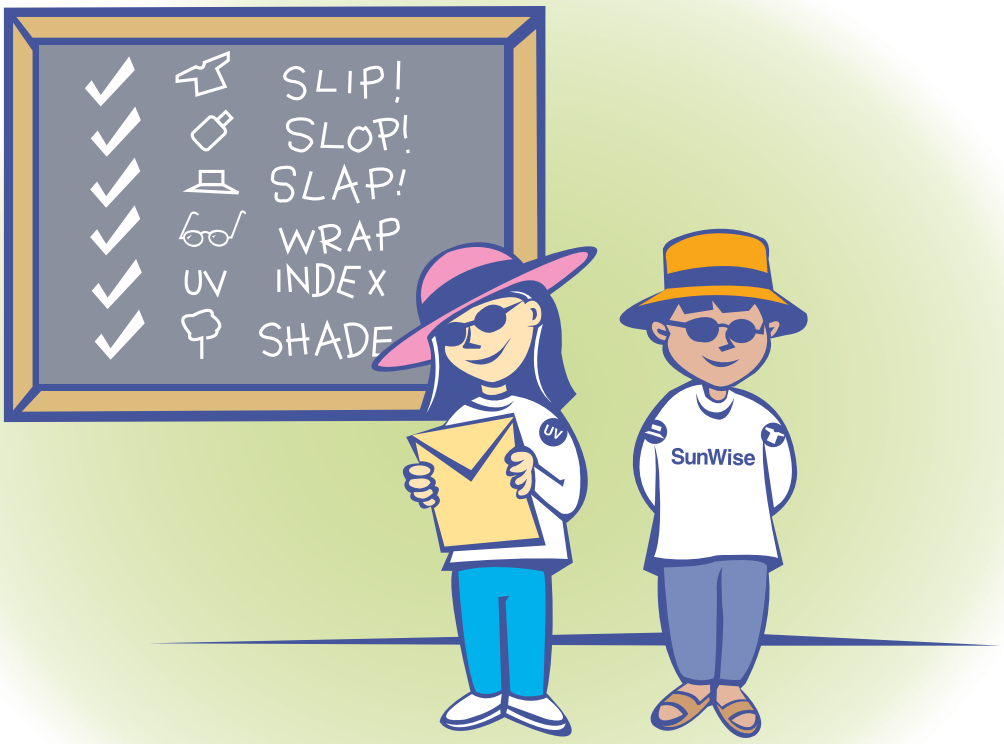
We **WRAPPED** on some sunglasses,

We **CHECKED the UV INDEX**, and

We **PLAYED in the SHADE**."

"We're sun safe and SunWise now," said Carlos.

"AND we completed our Secret Mission!" said Amy. "I wonder what our prize is?"



"A trip to the amusement park! That's our prize!" said Amy.

"**Welcome to the SunWise Club**, Lisa and Carlos!" said Erin.

"Thanks!" said Lisa and Carlos, together.

"Everyone can join the SunWise Club. You just have to learn to be SunWise," said Brian.

"Remember: **Slip! Slop! Slap! Wrap!,™ Check the UV Index,** and **Play in the Shade!**" said Sam.

The SunWise Program would like to thank the American Cancer Society for their ongoing support and for allowing us to use their "SLIP! SLOP! SLAP! WRAP!"™ slogan.

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The sun is a star that helps plants and animals on Earth. It gives us light so we can see, it keeps us warm, and it helps plants grow. We need the sun, but too much sunlight can be bad for people.

This book introduces young children to basic concepts about the sun and sun safety. Students will enjoy following members of the SunWise Club as they show their friends basic steps they should take to practice SunWise behavior.

Mission SunWise! and the accompanying Coloring and Activity Book are part of the Environmental Protection Agency's free SunWise Program. For more information on SunWise, visit our Web site at **www.epa.gov/sunwise**.