

# Here Comes the Sunscreen

“I’ll stand still while you put on my sunscreen,” said no kid ever.

But with these genius hacks from experts, you will come as close as humanly possible to peaceful sun protection.

by **LESLIE GOLDMAN** / photograph by **PRISCILLA GRAGG**



**MAKE A GAME OF DABBING ON SUNSCREEN AND YOUR KID WILL BE ALL SMILES TOO!**

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**SUN SAFETY** can be a huge hassle when you have young kids. Applying sunscreen seems to take forever, especially the ones that are toothpaste thick. It can get in your kid’s eyes and on your clothes because the ordeal is like wrestling a crocodile. Sand + sunscreen = hell. Kids hate hats. Beaches don’t have trees. The list goes on.

But protecting children’s skin is one of the most important things we can do. The risk of skin cancer starts to accumulate early on. At least five blistering sunburns before age 20 raise the risk of melanoma by 80 percent, according to a study at Brown University. “Even darker-skin-toned children get sunburns and are at risk of skin cancer when they grow up,” says Seemal P. Dasai, M.D., clinical assistant professor of dermatology at the University of Texas Southwestern. In other words, all families need not only to slather up, but also to take steps to avoid damaging UV rays.

How are you going to do all this? We’ve got your back.

WARDROBE AND PROP STYLING BY ASHLEY MONTAGUE. HAIRSTYLING BY KELSEY ZAHN FOR THE REX AGENCY. MAKEUP BY HEATHER RAE FOR THE REX AGENCY. CHILD WRANGLING BY MARK ALLEN. STUDIO TEACHING BY MARIE RODGERS. ON LITTLE GIRL: SWIMSUIT, MARYSIA; KERICHEE, BONTON PARIS. ON WOMAN: SWIMSUIT, MARYSIA; EARRINGS, LOREN STEWART; UMBRELLA, BUSINESS & PLEASURE CO.



# Smart Ways to Throw Shade

Your family needs extra cover, especially during the sun’s peak hours of 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

## AT THE SHORE

Set up a beach umbrella in the shade, suggests Joshua Zeichner, M.D., a dermatologist at Mount Sinai Health System, in New York City, and dad of two. Adjust its direction during the day to keep everyone cool. Dr. Zeichner likes **Zinnia Sun Screens** (\$250; zinniasunscreens.com), UV-protective canopies that fold up to fit in a backpack. “Your kids will have enough space to play and be well protected,” he says. See “A Day at the Beach? We’ve Got This, Guys!,” on page 79, for more ideas.

## IN THE CAR

Glass blocks UVB rays, but damaging UVA rays pass right through windows. Transparent window films screen out 99 percent of UVA rays; try those by 3M, Nexfil, or Solar Gard. Put sunscreen on kids’ exposed skin for long car rides, and keep a light blanket handy to cover their legs.

## IN THE STROLLER

Drape the lightweight 36-by-40-in. **Coolibar Baby Sun Blanket UPF 50+** (\$32; coolibar.com) over your little one’s exposed skin.



# 6 Tricks for Winning the Sunscreen Scuffle

Seasoned parents supply clever strategies to get your squirmer to cooperate.

## → Give her a choice.

“Just as you let your little one pick which snack she wants from two healthy options, give her the choice of two types of sunscreens from brands you trust.”

—Hillary Fogelson, four-time melanoma survivor and author of *Pale Girl Speaks*

## → Find the right pace.

“If your child has autism or sensory sensitivities, you might only get one arm covered before he needs a break for a book, a show, or a favorite activity. Unscented varieties tend to work best.”

—Lisa Goring, spokesperson for Autism Speaks; Manhasset, NY

## → Get aboard the sunscreen train.

“Everyone lines up—siblings, cousins, friends, parents—and receives a big squirt to rub on the back and shoulders of the person in front of him. An adult checks for missed spots.”

—Amanda Mushro; Gaithersburg, MD

## → Encourage silly faces.

“I ask my daughter to make a puffer-fish face. It usually entertains her long enough for me to apply and smooth out the sunscreen.”

—Lyla Gleason; New York, NY

## → Take an artsy approach.

“Buy a cheap paintbrush from the hardware store, and let kids ‘paint’ on the sunscreen themselves.”

—Stacie Vaughan; Pembroke, Ont., Canada



## → Sync it with snacktime.

Does your child ask you for a snack every couple of hours? You’re in luck! “Pick natural breaks like those for snacks and lunch to reapply sunscreen. By doing this, you’re not taking your little one away from her fun. This strategy also gives the sunscreen time to soak in before your kid heads out of the shade.”

—Becky Altman, summer-camp director; Chicago, IL



BOY WITH HAT: PRISCILLA GRAGG. MOM AND BABY: THAYER ALLYSON GOWDY.

# Sunscreens Parents Trust

To create this list, we asked skin-cancer survivors and dermatologists which sunscreens they use with their own families. Keep in mind: The FDA has announced that it’s reviewing sunscreen ingredients.

So far, the agency has given a thumbs-up to zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, deemed PABA and trolamine salicylate as not safe and effective, and has said further research is needed for 12 more ingredients. *Parents* advisor Lawrence F. Eichenfield, M.D., suggests looking for the two approved ingredients but says any sunscreen—in addition to UV-protective clothing and shade—is better than none. Always look for a product with SPF 30 or higher.

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## FOR FAMILIES WHO PREFER SPRAYS...

**Kiss My Face Sun Spray Lotion SPF 30**

“It’s a pump, so it has the ease of a spray without aerosol particles.” \$17

—Stacey Fixler, melanoma survivor; New York, NY

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## FOR LIPS...

**Supergoop! Acai Fusion Lip Balm SPF 30**

Protect your family’s smiles from the sun and moisturize at the same time.

“Lips are often forgotten about.” \$10

—Joshua Zeichner, M.D., dermatologist and dad of two; New York, NY

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## FOR NEWBORNS...

**Aveeno Baby Continuous Protection Sensitive Skin Lotion Zinc Oxide Sunscreen SPF 50**

Babies younger than 6 months need sun-protective clothing and should always be kept out of direct sun. For exposed skin, here’s a surprise: Sunscreen is safe! “If you think about it, zinc oxide is the main ingredient in diaper paste, so it’s fine for delicate baby skin.” \$10

—Kalyani Marathe, M.D., pediatric dermatologist at Children’s National Health System in Washington, D.C., and a new mom

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## FOR PROTECTION THAT WON’T STING EYES...

**Babyganics All Mineral Baby Sunscreen Stick SPF 50+**

“I love stick sunscreens for the face. Kids tend to rub their eyes and nose a lot, and goggles can rub sunscreen off. This has a nice waxy texture that stays put.” \$13 for two

—Samantha Conrad, M.D., dermatologist; Chicago, IL

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## FOR SENSITIVE SKIN...

**Banana Boat Simply Protect Sensitive Sunscreen SPF 50+**

This product—part of Banana Boat’s new line—avoids fragrances, parabens, and oxybenzone, ingredients that may irritate delicate skin. “My favorite sunscreens use chemical and mineral blockers.” \$19 for a pack of three

—Dr. Zeichner

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## FOR SKIN OF COLOR...

**Black Girl Sunscreen SPF 30**

“As an African American, I’ve found that traditional sunscreen leaves my skin looking white and ashy. At times it’s made me so self-conscious that I’ve skipped it, even though I knew it wasn’t healthy. My girls have been bothered by that too. This product is ultrasheer and residue-free.” \$19

—Monet Hambrick, blogger at *The Traveling Child* and mom of two; Miami, FL



**BUY OUR PICKS!** Hover your phone’s camera to access sunscreens in our Amazon shop.







## Dress 'Em for Less Drama

“Protective clothing can be even more effective than sunscreen,” says Samantha Conrad, M.D., a dermatologist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, in Chicago. “If you see dermatologists and their families on vacation, they are under an umbrella, wearing long sleeves and a hat.” Follow their lead and you’ll need to put sunscreen just on exposed skin before you send your kids off to play in the sprinklers.

Sun apparel is labeled with a UPF (ultraviolet protection factor) indicating the amount of UV rays that can penetrate the fabric. For instance, a UPF 50 shirt allows just 1/50 of UV radiation to reach the skin. Instead of dressing your squad in regular T-shirts—which offer a UPF of 5, allowing 1/5 of the sun’s UV through even when wet—go undercover with these adorable swimsuits and accessories.

### DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR SUNSCREEN BASICS?

Here’s a quick recap from Kalyani Marathe, M.D.

#### Minimum SPF for kids: 30

**Timing:** Apply 15 minutes before heading outdoors and reapply every two hours. Do it hourly if your kids are in and out of the water, sweating, or toweling off.

**How much:** 1 Tbs. for a baby or a toddler and 1½ Tbs. for an older

child. The average sunscreen user applies 25 to 50 percent of the suggested amount, so apply more than you think you need.

**Who:** Children and adults of all skin tones need sunscreen. (Melanin does not protect against skin cancer.)



### Hats to Wear in the Water

Every inch of brim slashes your lifetime skin-cancer risk by 10 percent, says Darrell S. Rigel, M.D., clinical professor of dermatology at NYU Langone Health, in New York City. Coolibar Kid’s Surfs Up All Sport Hat UPF 50+ combines a 3-inch front brim with a draped neck guard. \$22; [coolibar.com](http://coolibar.com)



### Rash Guard and Board Shorts

UV Skinz’s Sun & Swim Shirt has coordinating board shorts for the ultimate stay-safe combo. The shirt’s high collar protects the neck. \$27 for shirt, \$23 for shorts; [uvskinz.com](http://uvskinz.com)

### Mini Sunglasses

Look for mirrored lenses (you shouldn’t be able to see your child’s eyes) with a sticker indicating “UVA/UVB protection.” Babiators boast flexible rubber frames and impact- and shatter-resistant lenses, and if your little sunfish breaks or loses them within a year, the company will replace them for free. You’ll just pay for shipping! \$20; [babiators.com](http://babiators.com)



### Head-to-Toe for Tots

The Solumbra by Sun Precautions Toddler Swimsuit protects tots from neck to ankle with just one zip. Dr. Conrad loves that it’s 100+ SPF. \$50; [sunprecautions.com](http://sunprecautions.com)



### Mommy-and-Me Matching

Long-sleeved and UPF 50, the Mott50 Mini swimsuit has a back zipper for easy on and off, thumbholes for hand protection, and a slew of adorable patterns—many with matching designs in Mom’s size. Chrissy Teigen’s a fan. \$32 to \$68; [mott50.com](http://mott50.com)