



# Making Healthy Choices

## Goals:

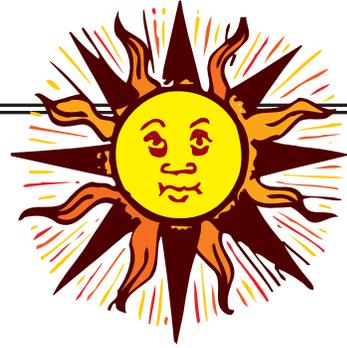
- To introduce SunSafety as a good choice we can make to protect ourselves.
- To add SunSafety onto the child's list of personal care tasks so that being SunSafe may become as automatic as teeth brushing, taking a bath, wearing shoes, etc. — in other words, easily remembered.
- To present idea of self advocacy, and help child develop strategies for speaking-up to an adult and reminding them if they forget, or educating a caregiver if they are not familiar with SunSafety.
- To reduce a child's resistance to practicing SunSafety.

## Activity:

### Part One: Class Discussion

Start by talking with the class about all the things we do to keep ourselves well, comfortable, healthy. Emphasize that taking care of your body and being protected feels better in the long-run.

continued



Possible Introduction:

“There are lots of things we can do to protect our bodies and stay healthy. Some of them are easy to remember because we do them every day. Others are harder to remember, and we may need somebody like a mom or dad or a teacher to help us remember.”

Ask the class:

“Can you think of something you do every day that helps keep you well and safe? Is it an easy thing to remember or a hard thing to remember?”

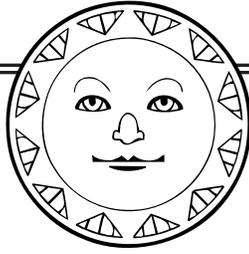
Possible answers:

- looking both ways before you cross the street
- washing your hands and face
- brushing your teeth
- eating healthy foods
- wearing socks and shoes
- putting on a coat and hat before you go out in the cold
- wearing a helmet when you ride your bike
- wearing a seat belt in the car
- using an umbrella or wearing a raincoat when it rains

Follow-up by asking:

“What are some of the things that could happen if you didn’t remember to do these things? How would that feel?”

continued



Continue with:

“All these things are choices we make . We decide to do these things because we want to avoid getting sick or being hurt. Plus, it feels better to be warm and dry and clean. Being SunSafe is something we can decide to do to keep our skin safe and well for a long, long time!

“What are the ways in which we can be SunSafe? Is it hard or easy to be SunSafe? What are some of the things that might make it not so easy to be SunSafe?”

Possible responses from children:

- I don't like to wear hats...
- It's not cool to wear a baseball hat with the brim pointing forward...
- Hat looks stupid — I might get teased by other kids...
- Too hot to wear a shirt...
- Sand sticks to my skin when I'm wearing sunscreen...

Discuss with the class some possible solutions to the things that children mention as being obstacles to practicing SunSafety such as:

- ...ask Mom to help you choose a hat with a brim that you do like!
- ...baseball players and other athletes wear their hats brim-forward to keep the sun off their faces so they can see better.  
That's pretty cool!

continued

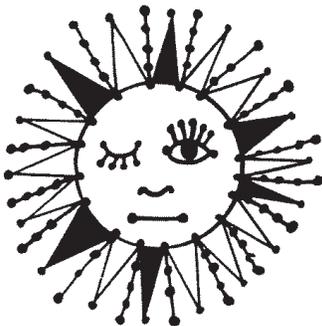
- ...when other kids tease you, explain SunSafety to them; tell them you know that too much sun can be dangerous and you don't like how a sunburn feels, and that you like to take care of yourself!
- ...make sure you choose a shirt that has sleeves but is light-weight, and decide to play in the shade!
- ...you can apply sunscreen before you go to the beach so that by the time you get there, your skin will be dry and the sand won't stick to you!

Ask them:

“What can happen if you aren't SunSafe and you go out in the sun for a while? How would that feel?”

Part Two: Role Playing!

1. Choose two children, one to play the adult, the other to play him or herself. (For extra fun, you can add a dress-up component if you want to, offering ladies' hats, dresses, or costume jewelry to the girls; men's jackets, neckties, hats, or grown-up-sized shoes to the boys, for the child playing the “grown-up”.)



continued

2. Ask them to act out the following scenario for the class:



The child playing the grown-up wants his or her “child” to be SunSafe before going outside to play. (You can set the scene more specifically if you want to, e.g. going out to play baseball, going out to build a fort, going to the beach...). The “child” has trouble remembering, or does not want to wear her hat/sunscreen/shirt. Have the “grown-up” explain why it is important to be SunSafe and let the children role-play the dilemma until the “child” is persuaded.

(You can also have children practice helping younger siblings to remember SunSafety if it is applicable.)

3. Have the class talk about what happened. Ask them if they can think of ways the “parent” might persuade the “child”. Have the two actors describe what it felt like to play each role.



4. Choose two more children to re-enact the same scenario. You can vary the situation (i.e. change the setting or destination), or repeat the same details so that the difference in strategy stands-out. Have the class discuss the results, noticing differences in strategies.



5. Choose another set of children, and this time ask them to switch in terms of who doesn’t remember or is unwilling to be SunSafe — i.e. have the “parent” not know about or not want to practice SunSafety, and have the “child” persuade the “parent” to be SunSafe. Discuss results with the class, specifically how to explain what SunSafety is to a caregiver or adult.

continued

### Teacher's Note:

There are several obstacles to SunSafety that you are trying to combat with this exercise:

1. Forgetting to be SunSafe on the part of the child.
2. Resistance to SunSafe measures (putting on sunscreen, keeping a hat on, etc.) on the part of the child.
3. Lack of Awareness or forgetting on the part of the care giver (in which case the child can learn to prompt the adult).
4. Resistance on the part of the caregiver to take the time to help the child apply sunscreen, find a hat, etc. (in which case the child can learn to advocate for him/herself or for younger siblings and ask for help).

Because these can be complicated issues, and class readiness to deal with such complexities may vary, it may be too much to attempt to address all of the above in one role-playing session. You may prefer, instead, to simplify the exercise, focusing on one or another issue, repeating the role playing segment with a different emphasis each time.



# Let's Ask Questions

## Learning to Be Media-Literate & SunSafe



### Goals:

To help children become informed consumers of the mass media (particularly television), and to learn to question the cultural assumptions presented, specifically in terms of SunSafety.

### Teacher's Note:

As there is a homework assignment, this activity will require two class sessions on consecutive days.

### Activity:

#### Part One: Introducing Concept of Media Literacy:

Begin by outlining the concept of Media Literacy in a class discussion.

These activities are aimed at older children (4th graders). While Media Literacy is a topic loaded with subtleties and complex concepts, it is possible to simplify them so that children across most grade levels may grasp them and be able to relate them to their own experience. Teachers of younger students may want to review the following activities and modify or condense them as seems appropriate.

continued

There are, of course, many extremely important issues to be included when teaching children about Media Literacy (such as television's influence on consumer use of tobacco products, and so on). While SunSafety is the emphasis here, this activity presents a good opportunity to discuss with students the various issues involved in learning to become Media Literate.

The following exercises focus on introducing the concept of Media Literacy itself, and on giving children some of the basic skills they can use to become Media Literate about any and all topics.

(For a detailed working definition of Media Literacy, please see the attached sheet from the Center for Media Literacy.)

*Possible introduction (can be made more or less sophisticated according to needs of the class):*

“Would anybody here go to the grocery store and buy a bunch of rotten bananas? Nooooo. Or an umbrella with holes in it? Nooooo, that would be a terrible idea! How about a new car with no brakes? Is that a good idea? No, it isn't!”

(Or use whatever exaggerated example you'd like to illustrate good consumerism in a fun and provocative way!)



continued

Talk about why you wouldn't buy things that don't work or might hurt you. Explain that although television seems mostly free because you do not have to buy a ticket to watch it, we "pay" for t.v. by watching the commercials. The advertisers pay a lot of money (*millions* of dollars) for us to see their products on t.v. We, in turn, buy the products advertised and "pay" for the shows.

Point out that most of us watch a lot of t.v. Ask children how many hours they watch each day? How many commercials do they think they see each day? Suggest that they count these sometime...

Commercials and t.v. shows "tell" us in all kinds of not-so-obvious ways a lot about how we are expected to look, behave, feel, dress, and so on. And just as we must learn to be careful shoppers at the grocery store, we must be careful viewers of television. Tell class that while it is easy to see if the bananas are rotten or the umbrella has holes, it is *not* always so easy to know if television is good or bad for us. We have to learn to look at t.v. very carefully in a lot of new ways, and to *ask questions about what we see* to decide this.

Possible explanation:

"Television programs and commercials have a lot of ideas in them about how we should *feel*, what is good or bad, who is smart, pretty, lucky and who is not, that are not part of the story, but are still there for us to see." [give examples]



continued

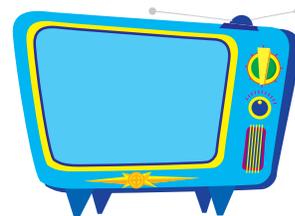
“And some of these ideas may not be ones we necessarily agree with. So it is up to us to look *carefully* at the things we see on t.v., and see if there are messages there that might be harmful or hurt somebody’s feelings; or make you feel unhappy in a way that is not right or fair; or messages that are just not true.

“What we see on t.v. can make us behave one way or another. Just as we need to check out the bananas before we buy them, we need to look carefully at what television is telling us.”

Explore further with children through group discussion the concept of looking at t.v. with a critical eye. Give them ideas for questions they may want to ask, things to look for the next time they watch.

#### Part Two: Homework Assignment:

1. Ask children to watch a t.v. show they enjoy with a parent or guardian. Encourage them to choose a show depicting real people (preferably not a cartoon), and one in which the characters go outside during the program (which may be harder to find...).
2. Review what SunSafety is all about so class may easily draw on this knowledge as they watch and answer questions.
3. Question Sheet attached may be reproduced and sent home with child. If you think it would be helpful, go over questions with class to be sure students understand them all.



continued

4. Ask them to *watch a show and commercials with the sound turned off* and with the help of a parent/guardian, answer the questions on the sheet. Explain that by turning the sound off, they may be able to see things about the show they would not otherwise notice. Tell them to be sure to bring in their completed Questions to class the following day!
5. Remind students that they will need to have question sheet and something to write with ready before program begins.
6. Have a class discussion the next day.
  - Start by asking them how it was watching the t.v. with the sound off? Did it change what they were able to notice?
  - Go over Question Sheet, item by item.
  - Explore with children the range of possibilities regarding viewing television (or any arm of the mass media) with a critical eye.
  - Explore issues relating to health and beauty — that a suntan is generally portrayed as indicating health, and is seen as being beautiful, but that we know that a suntan is *not* healthy for you, that in fact tan skin is *damaged* skin — and that definitions of beauty are more often than not defined/driven by the media.

Teacher's Note:

- Questions 1 through 4 are just to get the children started — easy answers to get them engaged in the project, and to have a place to begin for classroom discussion later.

continued

- Questions 5, 6, and 7 are to prompt the children to look for SunSafe practices, and to reinforce the SunSafe message in children’s minds.
- Questions 9 through 15 are conceptual in nature and ask the students to:
  - begin to develop a critical eye...
  - disassemble into various components what they formerly saw only as a package...
  - think about the “behind the scenes of television” — television as something deliberately created; *not* as something that just exists on its own, free of ideas about how people should live, etc.
  - ultimately begin to take on board the idea that they can have something to say about the messages presented

Part Three: Making a Commercial:

1. Divide children into groups of two, three, or four.
2. Ask them to think of commercials they have recently seen on t.v. that depict outdoor events, activities, or products.
3. Ask them to make up *two* 30 second commercials for the one pretend “product”: one commercial that is NOT SunSafe and one that IS SunSafe. Props will help children get involved and make this activity more fun for everyone. Have the students dress-up as t.v. actors using a few items of cloth-



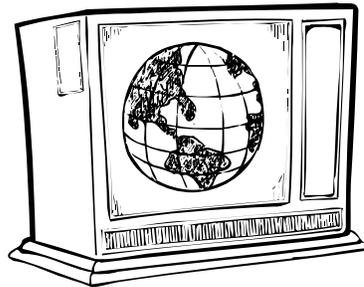
continued

ing like hats, sunglasses, costume jewelry, etc. Use boxes of detergent or cans of soda or whatever is handy to depict the “product”. Arrange chairs to represent cars, and so on.

4. Using a stop watch or second hand on a wrist watch to keep them within the time limit, have them act out their commercials. Have the class discuss the differences between the different versions.
5. Repeat using different children and a different pretend “product”.

Teacher’s Note:

For more information, help and materials on the subject of Media Literacy, contact *The Center for Media Literacy*, 4727 Wilshire Blvd. #403, Los Angeles, California 90010, telephone 1-800-226-9494.



# What is Media Literacy?

## An Operational Definition

“Media Literacy” is an overall term that incorporates three stages of a continuum leading to the media empowerment of citizens of all ages:

- The first stage is simply becoming aware of the importance of balancing or managing one’s media “diet”, that is, making choices and managing the amount of time spent with television, videos, electronic games, films and various print media forms.
- The second stage is learning specific skills of critical viewing - learning to analyze and question what is in the frame, how it is constructed and what may have been left out. Skills of critical viewing are best learned through inquiry-based classes or interactive group activities as well as from creating and producing one’s own media messages.
- The third stage goes behind the frame to explore deeper issues of who produces the media we experience - and for what purpose? In other words: Who profits? Who loses? And who decides? This stage of social, political and economic analysis looks at how each of us (and all of us together in society) take and make meaning from our media experiences and how the mass media drive our global consumer economy. The inquiry can set the stage for various media advocacy efforts to challenge or redress public policies or corporate practices.

Although television and electronic media may seem to present the most compelling reasons for promoting media literacy education in contemporary society, the principles and practices of media literacy education are applicable to all media from television to T-shirts, from billboard to the Internet.

Center for Media Literacy  
Elizabeth Thoman  
November 1995

# Let's Ask Questions About What We See on T.V.

## Directions:

Read over the questions on these pages before the show starts so you know what to look for!

Ask your mom or dad, or an adult who takes care of you, to do this homework with you. Turn on your television and choose a program to watch. Look for a show:



1. that has real people in it (NOT cartoons)
2. in which characters sometimes go outside

Now turn the sound OFF. Get a pencil and something to use as a desk, and get comfortable! Now watch carefully... and remember to **THINK** about what you are seeing, including the commercials! (Remember to watch with the sound turned off the whole time so you can concentrate on the pictures!!)

## As You Watch, Answer the Following Questions:

1. What is the name of the t.v. show?

---

2. What time did you watch it?

---

3. How long did you watch it?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did the people on the t.v. show and in the commercials go outside at all?

Yes       No

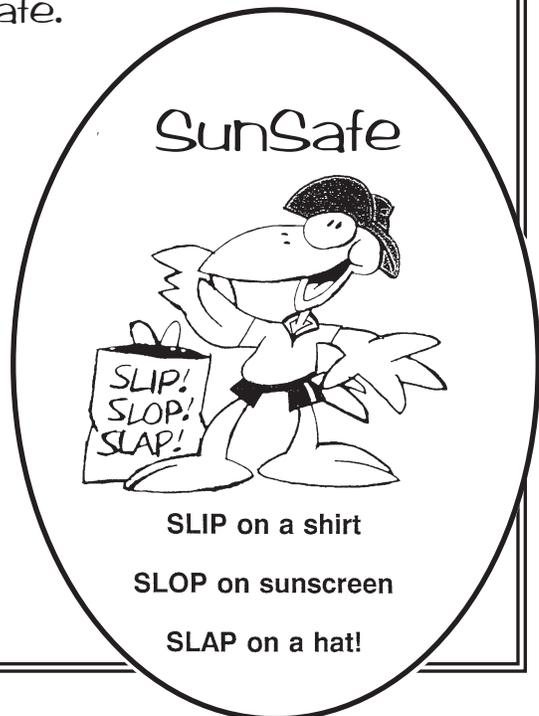
(If the people on the show or in the commercials are NOT going outside at all, change the channel until you find a channel on which they DO go outside.)

5. Were the characters on the program or in the commercials SunSafe?: (choose one)

No, they were NEVER SunSafe.

Yes, they were SOMETIMES SunSafe.

Yes, they were ALWAYS SunSafe!



6. How were the people on the show or in the commercials SunSafe?

---

---

I knew they were SunSafe because when they went outside they put on:

(check all the ones that you saw them use)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hat with a Brim    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses         | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Shorts or Pants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shirt with Sleeves | <input type="checkbox"/> Lipbalm              |

Other things I saw that made me think they were SunSafe are:

(fill in the blank!)

---

---

---

---



7. In what ways were they NOT SunSafe when they went outside? (Check all the answers that are true.)

- They did not wear hats with a brim.
- They did not put on sunscreen.
- They did not wear a shirt with sleeves.
- They stayed in the sun a long time.
- They did not go into the shade.
- Anything else? (fill in the blank!)

8. Did the people on the show look tan? (check one)

- Yes, they did look tan.
- No, they did not look tan.
- I couldn't really tell.

9. Did the people who were tan look nice to you?

- Yes       No

10. Do you think being tan makes the people on t.v. or in real life: (check one answer for each)

- |                  |                              |                             |
|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Happier?         | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| More Popular?    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Smarter?         | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Stronger?        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Healthier?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Have More Money? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Can you say why?

---

---

---

11. If the characters on t.v. had been SunSafe, would it have changed the show or the commercials?

Yes       No

If yes, can you say in what ways?

---

---

12. Would it have made you feel any differently about the characters? Would you have liked them more or less?

(choose one)

- I would have liked them more if they had been SunSafe.
- I would have liked them less if they had been SunSafe.
- I would have felt the same about them if they had been SunSafe.

13. Do you think the people who made the t.v. commercials and the t.v. show know about SunSafety?

- Yes, they do know.
- No, they do NOT know.

14. Do you think the people who made the t.v. show and the commercials want people to be SunSafe?

(choose one)

- Yes, they DO want people to be SunSafe.
- No, they do NOT want people to be SunSafe.
- They do not care if people are SunSafe.

Why or why not?

---

---

15. Do you think that the people who made the t.v. show and the commercials should care about SunSafety?

(choose one)

- Yes, they SHOULD care about SunSafety.
- No, they should NOT care about SunSafety.

Why should they care about SunSafety?

---

---

16. **\*\*EXTRA CREDIT QUESTION!!!\*\***

Can you think of some ways in which the people who make t.v. shows and commercials could help us feel good about SunSafety and help us remember to be SunSafe?

(write your answer below!)

---

---

---

---

---

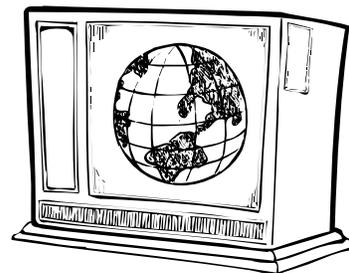
---

---

---

---

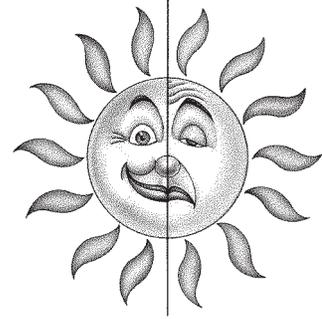
---



# Helpful Sun, Harmful Sun!

## Goal:

To have children learn to think of the sun as a very powerful entity — one that we cannot live without, but one that can be dangerous and must be respected.



## Activity:

### Part One: Learning About “Helpful” Sun

Begin by having the children talk about what the sun does for us that is *helpful*. Mention that it keeps all of us here on earth alive by:

- making the planet warm enough for all the plants and animals and people to live (have them speculate aloud what the earth might be like if there was no sun to warm it...)
- helping plants make carbohydrates through photosynthesis, after which the plants, in turn, provide us with food to eat and oxygen for us to breath (again, ask them to imagine a world with no plants...)
- turning water from the salty oceans into rain through evaporation — rain which then falls and becomes rivers and lakes — and provides us with fresh water to drink and places to swim (ask them how they would feel about a world with no fresh water!)

continued

- giving us day and night, and plenty of light by which to see
- helping us make vitamin D which we need for strong, healthy bones



Ask if students can think of other things the sun does that makes it possible for us to live. With the help of the class, *make a list of “Helpful” things the sun does* and put it up for all to see.

Conclude this part of the discussion by reinforcing the idea that not only does the sun make us warm and feel good, but *it actually keeps us alive.*

## Part Two: Learning About “Harmful” Sun

Next talk in general terms about how *too much of anything can be bad for you*, even make you sick...

Some possible examples:

- sugar tastes good to eat, but too much sugar can upset your stomach and be bad for your teeth...
- taking a bath makes you clean and helps your skin stay healthy, but if you stayed in the tub all day, you’d probably get all wrinkled and pruny, and your skin could become itchy and dry...

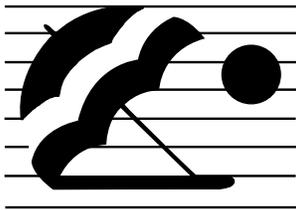
continued

- television is fun to watch and can help you learn, but if you watched it all day long, your brain would get sleepy and slow and you wouldn't be able to learn much at all...

Accordingly, while sun is necessary for survival, *too much sun can be bad for you and make you sick!* It feels nice to be outside playing in the sunshine. It often makes people feel happier to see the sun (especially after a long winter), and a sunny day can brighten most people's moods!

But the protective layer of the atmosphere just above the earth called the *Ozone Layer* (which used to keep out most of the harmful rays from the sun called *Ultraviolet Radiation*) has been damaged by chemicals coming from cars, refrigerators, air conditioners, and so on. **Now the damage to the Ozone Layer allows these powerful rays to reach us here on earth.**

Scientists have come up with a way to measure *just how much* Ultraviolet Radiation is hitting the earth. They report this information every day in something called the "*UV Index*". You can find this information in the newspaper, on the Internet, or sometimes even on t.v. or radio.



When you go to the beach this summer, look for a poster telling you what the "UV Index" is for that day. If the number is low, like 1, 2, or 3, the intensity of the UV Rays is not as powerful; when the UV Index number is high — like 7 to 8 — the Ultraviolet rays are *very* strong.

continued

Because certain kinds of this Ultraviolet Radiation can hurt us, too much exposure to the sun at the wrong time of day and without the proper protection can burn you and make you feel terrible. It can also permanently damage your skin and make you very, very sick later on when you are an adult. This is why it is very important for us to remember to respect the power of the sun and be SunSafe.

**HOT HOT HOT**

Teacher's Note:

*At this point, a mini-course on the science of the thinning Ozone Layer and Ultraviolet Radiation might be helpful to help students further understand why the sun can be so dangerous... (see the solar spectrum in the 3rd Grade Section of the SunSafe Curricular Manual, and Science Section of the SunSafe Reading List for books with further information on this subject.)*

Next, introduce the notion that though essential to our very survival, the *sun is* a huge star that is very, *very powerful and not under our control*. We cannot make the sun come or go — it happens all on its own, by virtue of the earth's rotation, etc. We cannot ask it to turn itself down a little, or make itself stronger when we want it to like we can a lamp or light bulb.

Using everyday things familiar to them, *ask children how hot they think the sun might be*. (The point here is to impress them with scale, not to scare them!) You might say:

“If you went close to the surface of the sun, would it be hot enough to...?”

- melt a car?
- vaporize a building?
- turn an airplane into a puddle?
- make the oceans boil?

scorching

continued

The answer to all of these questions is “YES!” (Substitute/add some items you think will most clearly give them the idea!)

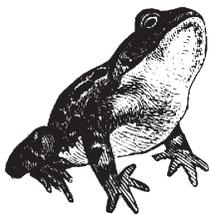
You might continue with:

“Luckily, the sun is very far away from the earth, so we don’t have to worry about the oceans boiling or buildings disappearing in a puff of smoke! But because of the thinning Ozone Layer, more of the sun’s harmful ultraviolet rays are reaching us. We have to be mindful of the sun’s great power.”

To engender interest, explain that it’s not just people who are hurt by the sun’s strong UV rays. Even *animals get can hurt by exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation from the sun.*

For example:

- skin cancer has been discovered in a species of fish living in tidal pools in Australia
- damage has occurred in the DNA of the eggs and larvae of icefish in Antarctica
- cats — especially light-colored ones with pink noses — can develop skin cancer on their noses and ears
- the World Conservation Union reports that amphibians (particularly frogs) may be having trouble reproducing due to damage being done to their eggs by UV exposure.



*Make a second list of some of the things the sun might do that could be harmful to people and animals.*

continued

### Part Three: Helpful Sun/Harmful Sun Art Project:

Have students *draw a picture depicting something “Helpful” that the sun **does** for them.* Ask them to *include a drawing of themselves being SunSafe* in the picture, and to write a sentence on the picture such as “The Sun is Helpful Because...”. (You can substitute drawing for making a collage or painting—use whatever materials are handy!)

Then have them each *draw a picture of something “Harmful” that the sun might do*, again *with a picture of themselves in the scene, being SunSafe*, and to complete the sentence “The Sun Can Be Harmful Because...”.

If you think you will be short on time, you can divide the class in half and have one side of the room do “Helpful Sun” pictures while the other side makes “Harmful Sun” pictures.

Ask children to present their drawings to the class, and have class talk more about the “Helpful/Harmful” dichotomy.



continued

#### Part Four: Search the Internet!:

If your school has a computer hooked-up to the Internet, and you and your students are interested and familiar enough with how to navigate it, have them search the Web for more information about:

- the Ozone Layer
- UV Rays
- skin cancer prevention
- decline in amphibian populations

You will find information that is of a very scientific nature, as well as simpler pages designed for the layperson. The EPA, for example, maintains a continuously-updated site posting the state of the Ozone Layer over various parts of the country at any given moment. You can also find information about various skin cancer prevention programs; UV levels; sunscreen product information; international agencies offering sun protection information; and so on. The possibilities are nearly endless!



The  
sun never rests  
so...  
Be SunSafe!