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Sunblock Investigation

Set up a simple experiment to find out how sunscreen counteracts the effects of the sun.

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Materials

- Dark-colored construction paper
- Sunblock with sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher
- A sunny day

Directions

1. Fold the paper in half. You'll leave one side alone and put sunblock on the other side.
2. Children can use their fingers to spread sunscreen on one side of the paper. If they'd like to make designs, that's fine.
3. Now leave the paper in a sunny spot outside for a few hours. (Don't forget to wash the sunscreen off your hands.)
4. After a few hours, observe the paper. What happened to the side without sunscreen? Is it still dark-colored? How is the side with sunscreen different from the side without sunscreen?

Take It Further

- Ask children to think about some other ways that people can protect themselves from sunburn. Broad-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, sunglasses, or even just sitting in the shade are some ideas they might come up with.
 - If kids are dressed for summer weather, have them observe each other for places that they need sunscreen. Faces, arms, and legs are obvious spots, but there are other places that are easy to miss. Necks, tops of ears, tops of feet, and parts in our hair need protection, too. If children identify these areas using their own powers of observation, they might be a little happier about protecting them with sunscreen.
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