From BBQs to beach time, families are spending the last days of summer break having outdoor fun. However, as the summer days wane, the need for sunscreen protection remains. Parents need to make sure their kids are covered, and there are plenty of SPF options available. But for parents of infants under six months, sun protection isn't that simple. A majority of sunscreens made specifically for kids or even babies aren't recommended for babies under six months of age.

"A baby's skin is thinner and more delicate than an adult's and burns and irritates more easily," explained Dr. Ameera Nauman, a pediatrician at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center in Alton. "Because babies have thinner skin, it is thought that they may be able to absorb more of the chemicals leading to rashes and other side effects from the sunscreen."

So what should parents of young infants do when they can't avoid the sun? According to, Dr. Nauman, planning ahead is your best bet.

"Try to avoid sun exposure by dressing them in light outerwear clothing that covers their arms and legs, as well as hats, to shade their neck and face," she said. "If unable to do this, a minimal amount of sunscreen with at least 15 SPF can be applied to small areas, like the baby's face and the back of his hands."

The risk for skin damage and skin cancer is directly related to the sun exposure a person experiences throughout his or her lifetime, and the risks add up over time. Because of this, skin irritation from sunscreen beats a burn on your child. Dr. Nauman recommends applying the sunscreen of your choice to the infant's back 48 hours before applying it to more sensitive areas like the hands, feet or face.

"This way, if a rash develops, a discussion can be had with the pediatrician about special sensitive skin formulas to protect against the sun. For sensitive skin babies, it is worth it to check for ingredients like titanium dioxide and zinc oxide which are hypoallergenic ingredients that top the skin instead of be absorbed by the skin," she said.