



Vision Screening Results Educational Materials for Parents and Guardians

Date: _____ School: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian of: _____

Your student was given a vision screening in school. The results of the screening indicate your student may have a vision disorder. The vast majority of vision problems in school-age students are treatable. It is recommended that your student have a comprehensive eye examination by an eye doctor (ophthalmologist or an optometrist).

The student used glasses/contact lenses for the screening: Yes / No (circle one)

REASON FOR REFERRAL:

_____ Visual Acuity (Right _____ Left _____)
_____ Muscle Balance
_____ Other: _____

What free or low-cost resources are available to help your child if he/she has a vision problem?

Students who qualify for Maryland Medical Assistance programs can enroll at any time. Eligible students can be enrolled in Medicaid or the Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP): 1) online at <https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov>) 2) by calling the Maryland Health Connection at 1-855-642-8572 (TTY: 1-855-642-8573); 3) through the mobile app ‘Enroll MHC’; or 4) by visiting your local health department or calling 410-838-1500.

There are also locally available, free or low-cost nonprofit programs that may provide eye examinations and eyeglasses for children. Please contact your school nurse or local health department to discuss these options in your community.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN’S VISION

What is the difference between a vision screening and a comprehensive eye examination?

A vision screening is not a substitute for a comprehensive eye exam. A vision screening can be performed by a school nurse or vision care technician and includes all or some of the following tests:

- Visual acuity measurement
- Depth perception
- Eye muscle balance

The goal of school vision screening programs is to identify children with vision problems who are or may be at risk for vision problems, that if not treated early, can lead to permanent vision loss. Screenings are not diagnostic, but a screening can determine if a comprehensive eye examination is needed.

Comprehensive eye examinations can be performed only by an eye doctor (ophthalmologist or ~~an~~ optometrist). Comprehensive eye examinations include:

- Medical and family history
- Visual acuity measurement
- Depth perception
- Eye muscle balance
- Pupil function and assessment of peripheral vision
- Structural eye health evaluation including pupil dilation with drops
- Refraction to determine the need for glasses



Which at-risk groups are encouraged to have a comprehensive eye examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist? At-risk groups include those:

- Who failed a vision screening or who cannot be screened in school;
- Whose parents/guardians, caregivers, or school staff are concerned that their child or student has a vision related problem or is not reaching age appropriate developmental or academic milestones;
- With known neurodevelopmental disorders (motor abnormalities such as cerebral palsy, cognitive impairment, autism spectrum disorder, hearing impairment, or speech delay);
- With systemic or genetic diseases known to have associated eye disorders (e.g. diabetes, juvenile idiopathic arthritis);
- Using medications known to have ocular side effects;
- With a history of premature birth of less than 32 weeks or low birth weight of less than 3.3 pounds (1500 grams) who has not already had a normal comprehensive eye examination; or
- With a known family history of strabismus, amblyopia, or high refractive error in a parent, sibling, or child.

What are the warning signs, symptoms, risk factors, and behavioral problems associated with vision disorders or eye conditions?

A primary care physician, optometrist, or ophthalmologist should evaluate students who exhibit the following signs, symptoms, or behaviors:

- Squinting or frowning when trying to focus
- Tilting or turning of head to one side most of the time
- Complaints of blurred or double vision
- Watery, red eyes or complaints of burning, scratching, or itchy eyes
- Closing or covering one eye when doing near work
- Needing to hold reading material close to their face or move closer to board
- Headache, nausea, or dizziness
- Strabismus
- Excessive blinking
- Unusual sensitivity to light
- Eyelid lesion or infection
- Cloudiness or haze of cornea
- White pupil
- Unequal or irregular pupils
- Signs of eye injury

What are the potential educational impacts of untreated visual impairments?

Visual functioning is a strong predictor of academic performance in school-age children.¹ Untreated vision problems may interfere with learning and can lead to permanent vision loss. Early detection and treatment of vision problems are critical for optimal eye health and academic success. Students with undiagnosed vision disorders or eye conditions may exhibit problems with attentiveness, behavior in the classroom, or behavior at play.

What are the most common vision problems in children?

The vast majority of vision problems in students are treatable, the most common of which are:

- Refractive errors (the need for glasses)
- Strabismus (eye misalignment)
- Amblyopia (lazy eye)

There are less common and more difficult to treat medical eye conditions which include, but are not limited to:

- Nystagmus
- Cataracts
- Glaucoma
- Optic atrophy
- Cortical visual impairment
- Optic nerve hypoplasia
- Retinopathy of prematurity

School Nurse: _____ Phone Number: _____

¹Prevent Blindness: <https://www.preventblindness.org/childrens-vision-and-eye-health>