

School Vision Screening

School vision screening programs serve to identify those not currently under professional care or who need professional reevaluation. In addition, eye screening programs may act to help direct the priorities in eye care delivery when funding is limited.

School Vision Screenings Program. While the primary responsibility for the health of a child is with the parents/legal guardians, a health care system must do all it can to ensure that each child has an equitable chance at an education. When a child's vision does not function effectively, the learning process becomes compromised.

The rationale for school vision screening programs is sound. The type of individual eye screening programs available will be dictated by a number of factors such as the age of the child, availability of personnel, funding to conduct the screenings, and alternate programs or resources.

Screening is essential in detecting visually significant refractive errors, amblyopia, and other ocular conditions. The screening should use the testing procedures recommended in these guidelines or consider the use of other medically accepted methods of vision screening.

When staffing and resources are available, the following is offered as a model school vision screening program:

1. School Responsibility. A School Nurse is typically the individual directly responsible for the implementation of the school vision screening program. If an Indian Health Service eye care program is easily accessible, the screening can be coordinated between the eye care provider and the school as appropriate.
2. Vision Screening Schedule and Guidelines.
 - a. Schedule for School-age Children. Annual screenings should be performed once children enter elementary school. If this cannot be done due to limited resources, screening on alternate years should occur.
 - b. Guidelines for School-age Children. Vision screenings may include the following, depending on availability and school screening setting: auto-refraction; cover testing; visual acuity; motility testing; stereo acuity; and automated screening devices.
3. Referral Letters. For vision screenings not performed by Optometrists occurring in schools or community health settings, the school or community health nurse should identify those students who do not pass the screening or need further testing by sending Optometry clinic referral letters to parents/guardians of children who fail the screening. The eye clinic contact information should be made available.