

Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)
School Health Services

Hearing and Vision Screening Notice to Parents/Guardians

Prekindergarten/Head Start Unit
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Healthy vision and hearing is important for your child's success in school. Difficulties in hearing and seeing that are not recognized and treated may impact your child's ability to see and/or hear. Seeing and hearing are necessary to learn and develop social relationships. State of Maryland Education Law 7-404 requires school children to have their hearing and vision screened. In compliance with this law, students new to MCPS, including PreK and Head Start will be screened for possible hearing or vision problems. Trained hearing and vision screeners will provide the screenings at your child's school.

You will receive a referral form, via US mail, to take to your child's authorized health care provider if your child fails the screening. If your child is already under care for a hearing or vision problem, or if you do not wish your child to be screened at school because of conflicts with your religious beliefs, please notify the school nurse in writing.

If your child wears glasses or contacts they should wear them every day and bring them to the screening.

School based vision screenings may not detect every vision problem. To learn more about possible vision problems and symptoms or health conditions that may require additional evaluation go to Montgomery County Government's website at this link: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/SchoolHealth/HearingVision.html>

CHILDREN at RISK for VISION PROBLEMS

Vision screening is not a substitute for and does not replace a comprehensive eye exam performed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. *At risk groups, including the following children, are encouraged by the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health to have a comprehensive eye examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.*

- Eyes that do not look normal
- Neurodevelopmental disorders such as hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, speech delay
- Health conditions with known effects on the eye—diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis
- Parents or siblings with vision problems
- Prematurity of less than 32 weeks
- Parents/guardians who believe their child has a vision problem

VISION PROBLEMS

- **Amblyopia**, also called lazy eye, is blurry or reduced vision that is not corrected by glasses. Crossed eyes, eyes that don't line up or one eye that focuses better than the other can cause amblyopia. Amblyopia can be treated.
- **Astigmatism** is blurry vision that occurs when the cornea (clear front cover of the eye) has an irregular shape. Children with astigmatism may need glasses/contacts.
- **Farsightedness** (hyperopia) occurs when the eyeball is too short for focusing. Images of near objects may appear blurred. Hyperopia may be corrected with glasses/contacts.
- **Nearsightedness** (myopia) occurs when the eyeball is too long for focusing. Images of distant objects appear blurred. Myopia may be corrected with glasses/contacts.
- **Strabismus** is crossed eyes or eyes that do not line up with each other. If untreated, strabismus can cause amblyopia.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call the DHHS Head Start Health Coordinator at 240-777-1645.