



A Vision for the Future: Designing an Evidence-Based, Universal Approach to Ensure Children's Vision and Eye Health

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Children's Vision & Eye Health

- Ensuring healthy vision in very young children promotes healthy development and an improved ability to learn



The Critical Need for Early Identification and Treatment

Development of Vision Infancy, 0-3 years

Lea Hyvärinen et al., 2014.



Effect of Supported Accommodation



Challenges

- Vision problems are present in 1 in every 20 preschool-age children in the U.S.
- Only 1 in 5 children screened by the age of 5



Challenges

- Currently, there is no uniform approach for:
 - funding vision and eye care for children,
 - screening procedures,
 - frequency of screening,
 - referral criteria,
 - follow-up methods, and
 - data collection



National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health

- Goal: *Create a public health infrastructure that promotes a comprehensive system of vision care and eye health for all young children through:*
 - Identifying and eliminating barriers to eye care
 - Establishing and implementing system improvements to reduce duplication of services & improve communication among providers
 - Providing resources to vision screeners, providers, and families
 - Supporting national efforts for children's vision and eye health



What We Know: Children's Vision & Long Term Health

- Undiagnosed and untreated amblyopia has a detrimental impact on development leading to long term impacts
 - self-esteem, physical ability, learning
- Early vision problems can impair pre-reading skills and may predispose to early learning problems
- Cumulative costs savings and improved quality of life with early intervention, when most readily treatable and relatively inexpensive



GAME CHANGERS

Recommendations from the National Expert Panel: Children 36 months to <72 Months

- The recommendations are published in the January 2015 issue of *Optometry and Vision* and focus on
 - Recommended Practices; Proposed Data Systems; Proposed Data Definitions
- Vision Health Systems for Preschool Age-Children website hosted by NCCVEH:
<http://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/new-recommendations-vision-health-systems>



Recommendations from the National Expert Panel

- All children 36-72 months should be screened annually (Best Practice)
 - At least once between 3rd and 6th birthdays (Minimum Standard)
- Vision screening requires training and certification of personnel with recertification every 3-5 years
- Vision screening programs must use adequate space, equipment, and supplies



Recommendations from the National Expert Panel

- Screening results must be communicated to:
 - Parents
 - Medical home/primary care provider
 - School
 - State agency
- Referral to ophthalmologist or optometrist when indicated
- Establishment of a robust data system that:
 - Is integrated with other health data
 - Accepts data from educational, community, public health settings, primary care and eye care
 - Is monitored for system performance



NCCVEH Empowering Key Stakeholder Groups to Ensure Early Detection and Treatment

- Evidence-based vision screening practices and improved follow-up to eye care
- Integrated data systems to improve surveillance
- State and national-level performance measures to track program accountability



Thank you!