

CHILDREN'S VISION AND EYE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS BY STATE

The information in the chart below was compiled based on information available at the time of publication. A "Y" reflects only a binding legal requirement — a statute, regulation, or administrative rule. The "Other Information" column provides additional context readers may find useful. This may include: guidelines or recommendations issued by a state agency; details on what happens when a child fails a screening, such as a required follow-up eye exam; funding or assistance available for screening, eye exams, or eyewear; recently enacted legislation that has not yet taken effect; and other relevant clarifications about a state's requirements. Readers should consult the most current state statutes, regulations, and applicable guidance from their state public health and/or education departments, as state requirements and recommendations may change.

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STATE	Pre-School	School-Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
Alabama	N	N	No state requirements	The state funds vision screening and case management for preschool and school-age children. Funding comes through the state's annual budget appropriations rather than a standing statute.
Alaska	N	Y	Upon school entrance and at regular intervals determined by the school district	
Arizona	Y*	Y	Pre-K* or K upon first entry; grades 3 and 7; students receiving or considered for special education services and not screened in the past year; students at the school's discretion from other grade levels; students for whom teachers requested a screening and have not been screened in the past year; and students not reading at the proficient level by third grade	*Required if a public or charter school offers a preschool program; children will be screened upon first entry.

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Arkansas	Y*	Y	Public Pre-K; K; grades 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8; transfer students; and any student, regardless of grade, referred by a teacher or school nurse	* Required if a public school or public charter school offers a preschool program. Requires a follow-up eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist within 60 days of a failed screening (except a failed color perception test).
California	N	Y	K, or upon first enrollment or entry to school; grades 2, 5, and 8; screened for near and distance vision	Color vision is tested once, and only for male pupils, no earlier than first grade.
Colorado	Y	Y	Pre-K; K; grades 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 9 Screening conducted by a teacher, the principal, or other qualified person authorized by each school district	Pre-K added to the requirement by HB 26-1193, signed into law in 2026; effective August 12, 2026.
Connecticut	N	Y	K; grades 1, 3, 4, and 5	A health assessment that includes vision screening is required before first entry into public school, completed by the child's own health care provider rather than the school.
Delaware	N	Y	K; grades 2, 4, 7, and 9 or 10; students upon first entry into a Delaware public school (including transfers from another state, another country, a nonpublic school, or another educational setting); students referred by a teacher or administrator; students considered for special education; and driver education students within 1 year before in-car driving hours.	As of 2024, "vision screening" is statutorily defined to include a test for color blindness.

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District of Columbia	Y	Y	Annually, for every student in Pre-K through grade 12, as part of a required health certificate completed and signed by a physician or advanced practice nurse	
Florida	N	Y	K; grades 1, 3, and 6; and any student in grades K through 5 who is new to a Florida school	
Georgia	Y*	Y	Upon first entry into the school system	* Required if a public school offers a preschool program. A parent or guardian of a child being admitted for the first time to a public school must file a completed Form 3300 (Georgia Department of Public Health Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening) with the school when the child is enrolled.
Hawaii	Y*	Y*	State law establishes a systematic hearing and vision screening program for children, though no specific grades or intervals are named in the statute itself.	*State law exists but remains unfunded and unenforced. Screening is done by volunteer nonprofits, not school nurses, per still-unapproved draft standards recommending screening at Pre-K, K, and grades 1, 3, and 5 (with grades 7 and 10 recommended as capacity permits).
Idaho	N	N	No state requirements	

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Illinois	Y	Y	Annual screening for Pre-K children ages 3 years or older in any public/private preschool or licensed childcare facility; grades K, 2, and 8; transfer students; special education students; and students referred by teachers – in all public, private, and parochial schools	Children enrolling in kindergarten, or any student enrolling in an Illinois school for the first time, must have a full eye exam by a licensed optometrist or physician, with proof submitted by October 15 of the school year. Starting January 1, 2027, this eye exam must include a color vision deficiency test. Schools may hold report cards until proof is provided; waivers are available if a family can't access an exam. Starting the 2027-2028 school year, color discrimination testing will be added to the mandatory K, 2nd, and 8th grade vision screenings (signed into law August 7, 2026, effective January 1, 2027).
Indiana	N	Y	K or grade 1; grades 3, 5, and 8 (including students at first entry or transferring in at any of these grades); and students suspected of having a visual defect, regardless of grade	Students in K or grade 1 require a more extensive exam (Modified Clinical Technique) performed by a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist. A school corporation may obtain a waiver from this requirement, in which case those students receive the standard vision screening instead.
Iowa	N	Y	At least once before enrollment in K and again before enrollment in grade 3	Vision screening shall be performed no earlier than one year prior to the date of enrollment in kindergarten or 3rd grade and no later than 6 months after date of enrollment.

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Kansas	N	Y	At least once each school year for K and grades 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10; and within the first year of enrollment for any student new to the district or an accredited nonpublic school	Students needing help with basic reading, writing, or math skills are encouraged (not required) to get an eye exam to rule out vision-related barriers.
Kentucky	Y	Y	Eye exam required by an optometrist or ophthalmologist for any child ages 3, 4, 5, or 6 years upon first entry into public Pre-K, Head Start, or public school; with proof submitted to the school by January 1 of that school year	Beyond the entry-level eye exam, Kentucky law requires school districts to run an ongoing vision screening program but leaves the choice of which grade levels are screened to each local school board.
Louisiana	N	Y	Required annually for all students, following the schedule set by the American Academy of Pediatrics; grade 1 students also receive color vision screening; follow-up required within 60 days if a problem is found	All kindergarten students must also receive a universal dyslexia screening during the second half of the school year.
Maine	Y	Y	Pre-K; K; grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9	Distance acuity shall be screened in preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. Near vision acuity is only required to be screened in grades 1 and 3; screening preschool, kindergarten, and grade 5 students for near vision is recommended but not required. Children who received a comprehensive eye examination from an eye care provider within the previous 12 months do not need to have a school vision screening.

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Maryland	Y	Y	Pre-K and K, upon first entry; grade 1; and grades 8 or 9	County health departments must also fund vision screening for students in approved private schools and approved nonpublic special education facilities.
Massachusetts	Y	Y	Upon first entry into K or once within the 12 months prior to K entry Annually from K through grade 5; once in grades 6 through 8; and once in grades 9 through 12	A comprehensive eye exam by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist is required for any child diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental delay, or for any child who fails the vision screening.
Michigan	Y	Y	Pre-K, once between ages 3 and 5; and school-age children in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, or grades 1, 3, 5, 7 with the ninth-grade screening tied to driver's training instead. Students not enrolled in a graded program (such as homeschooled students) are screened every 2 years starting at age 6.	County health departments conduct school-based vision screenings under a program administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. A written statement notifying the parent or guardian is required if a screening indicates a need for follow-up care, stating that an eye exam is needed. The notice itself is required by law; completing the exam is not.

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Minnesota	Y	N	Early childhood developmental screening at least once before school entrance, targeting children who are between the ages of 3 and 4 years (includes vision screening)	The pre-entrance screening is a mandatory condition for a child to continue attending kindergarten or first grade. A child is exempt if health records show they've already received comparable developmental screening from a public or private health care organization or individual health care provider. The Minnesota Department of Health recommends vision screening in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10.
Mississippi	Y	Y	Children enrolled in Mississippi's state-funded voluntary Pre-K program (Early Learning Collaboratives) must have a vision screening and/or referral plan in place; and K within the first 45 days of the school year	If the kindergarten screening indicates a need, a comprehensive eye exam is recommended by an optometrist or ophthalmologist by January 1 of the child's first-grade year. The state's vision screening program may also make screening services available to students in grades 1–12, though this is not required beyond kindergarten.
Missouri	N	N	No state requirements	Vision screening is recommended, and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services – in coordination with the state's Children's Vision Commission – issues guidelines for districts (preschool through grade 12).

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Montana	N	N	No state requirements	Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services guidance recommends vision screening for all students new to a district, students in grades K–3, and every other grade after 3rd.
Nebraska	Y	Y	Pre-K (ages 3-5); K; grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6: annual distance vision screening Pre-K and K: near vision screening also required, but only once during each period, not annually	A visual evaluation – testing for amblyopia, strabismus, eye health, and visual acuity – by a physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, or optometrist is required within 6 months before a child enters kindergarten or first grade (typically while the child is aged 4 or 5 years), or for any student transferring in from out of state, regardless of grade.
Nevada	N	Y	Required before first entry in elementary school and one additional grade in elementary school; one grade in middle or junior high school; and one grade in high school. Also required for transfer students, special education students, and students referred for screening.	
New Hampshire	N	N	No state requirements	New Hampshire Office of School Health guidance recommends a complete vision exam (near, distance, color, and binocular vision) within a student's first year of entering or transferring into school, followed by periodic re-screening of distance vision in later years.

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New Jersey	Y	Y	Upon enrollment in publicly funded Pre-K programs; biennially in K through grade 10	
New Mexico	Y	Y	Pre-K; K; grades 1 and 3; and transfers	If a student fails the screening, a state administrative rule requires that the Save Our Children's Sight Fund cover a comprehensive eye exam, eyeglasses or contacts, and insurance covering the future loss or breakage of lenses – regardless of family income.
New York	Y	Y	Pre-K; K; grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 11; and at any other time deemed necessary, shall be screened for distance and near vision acuity	
North Carolina	N	Y	Upon first entry into K, with certification provided to the school within 180 days of the start of the school year	For kindergarten children who receive and do not pass the required vision screening, a comprehensive eye examination is required.
North Dakota	N	N	No state requirements	
Ohio	N	Y	K or grade 1, upon first entry, before November 1 of the student's first year of enrollment. Parents must be notified of the district's screening program by August 1 and may opt out by signing a written statement.	State guidance recommends additional vision screening annually for school-based preschool children and in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. A comprehensive eye exam is required within 3 months for any student newly identified with a disability who begins receiving IEP services, unless the student was examined within the prior 9 months. This requirement doesn't apply to a universal or failed-screening trigger — it's limited to this population, and a student can't be denied services for non-compliance.

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Oklahoma	N	Y	K; grades 1 and 3	
Oregon	Y	Y	School districts are required to maintain a vision screening program (no specific grades mandated). Students age 7 or younger must submit certification of a vision screening or eye exam within 120 days of first entry into an educational program.	State guidance recommends screening at Pre-K, K, and grades 1, 2 or 3, 4 or 5, 7 or 8, and 10 or 11, plus first school entry, driver education, special education entry, grade retention, and parent/teacher referral – ideally annually.
Pennsylvania	N	Y	Annually, K through grade 12, conducted by a nurse or medical technician	Act 122 of 2020 was signed into law on November 25, 2020, but does not yet include regulations. Act 122 will require a comprehensive eye exam within 120 days after a failed vision screening, and vision screening certification within 30 days of the start of the school year at first entry into kindergarten.
Rhode Island	Y	Y	Kindergarten or first entry (including preschool), grades 1–5, 7, and 9	A comprehensive eye exam by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist is required for any child who fails the vision screening or is diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental delay.
South Carolina	N	N	No state requirements	South Carolina Department of Public Health guidance recommends screening for students in Pre-K, K, grades 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7; and at least once in grades 9–12; plus new-to-district students without a recent screening record.
South Dakota	N	N	No state requirements	

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Tennessee	N	N	No state requirements	Tennessee law encourages public schools, nursery schools, kindergartens, preschools, and childcare facilities to inform parents about the benefits of eye care, and encourages local education agencies to seek free or reduced-cost eye examinations for children unable to afford them.
Texas	Y	Y	Required for first entry after age 4 years; and grades 1, 3, 5, and 7	
Utah	Y	Y	Pre-K; K; grades 1, 3, 5, 7 or 8, and 9 or 10; vision screening or referral to an eye care professional required for students being evaluated or reevaluated for special education	Children under age 9 years upon first entry into Utah public school must show proof of a vision screening or eye exam completed within the past year, or be screened during their first year of enrollment. As of July 1, 2026, schools must also follow up with parents by phone or email within 30 days of not passing an initial vision screening.
Vermont	N	Y	Periodic vision screening of school-aged children is required by statute, though specific grades are not named in the law itself	Vermont Department of Health and Agency of Education guidance recommends screening at Pre-K, K, and grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 12.
Virginia	N	Y	K; grades 2 or 3; 7; and 10	
Washington	N	Y	K; grades 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7; and any student referred by a parent, guardian, or school staff, or showing signs of a possible vision problem affecting learning	

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West Virginia	N	Y	All children shall receive vision screening upon first entry into public school prior to enrollment	Screening isn't automatic for children entering a private or nonpublic school, or for children too young to be required to attend school – but a parent or guardian can request it. West Virginia Pre-K, a state-mandated program for all 4-year-olds and eligible 3-year-olds, recommends a HealthCheck screening, or comparable health screening, at enrollment.
Wisconsin	N	N	No state requirements	Wisconsin law requires public school districts to request that parents of kindergarten students have their child's eyes examined by an optometrist or evaluated by a physician.
Wyoming	N	N	No state requirements	Wyoming Department of Education guidance recommends screening at K (or first entry), and grades 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10.

Please email us if you have questions or an update on vision screening legislation in your state.
info@preventblindness.org *(Updated: 10/01/26)*