

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" indicates that a state has a statute, regulation, administrative rule, or other legally binding requirement for vision screening or an eye examination. Nonbinding guidelines or recommendations issued by state agencies are not included unless they have been adopted as requirements in law or regulation. Many states without legally binding requirements do have published guidance, and some provide funding for vision screening. 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. At the time of publication, we are aware of several states reviewing their vision screening requirements; these are noted in the "Other Information" column.

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STATE	Pre-School	School-Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
Alabama	N	N	No state requirements	State funds preschool and school-age screening and case management
Alaska	N	Y	Upon school entrance and at regular intervals determined by the school district	Upon school entry. Regular intervals specified by the governing body of the school district. The Alaska Department of Health establishes statewide vision screening standards
Arizona	Y*	Y	First entry to school and at no more than 2 additional grade levels, students receiving or considered for special education services, 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, students who are not reading at grade level by third grade	*Required if a public or charter school offers a preschool program; child will be screened upon entry Guidance in development for school-age children

STATE	Pre-School	School - Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
Arkansas	Y*	Y	Public Pre-K, K, grades 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 transfer students, referrals	*Required if a public school offers a preschool program Requires follow-up eye exam after any failed screen
California	N	Y	K, grades 2, 5, 8 transfer students	New guidelines will be published in 2020
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	
Connecticut	N	Y	K, grades 1, 3, 4, and 5; Before first entry into public school: required health assessment that includes vision screening (completed by the child's health care provider, not the school)	
Delaware	N	Y	K; grades 2, 4, 7, and 9 or 10	School enterers (children enrolling in and attending a Delaware public school for the first time, including students transferring 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
District of Columbia	Y	Y	Universal Health Certificate is required annually for all students entering into Child Care Facilities, Head Start, and DC public, private and parochial schools (includes a visual acuity screen)	

STATE	Pre-School	School - Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
Florida	N	Y	K, grades 1, 3, 6 transfer students entering K–5	
Georgia	Y*	Y	Entry into school system	* Required if a public school offers a preschool program
Hawaii	Y*	Y	Pre-K, K, grades 1, 3, and 5	*School nurses do not screen vision. Non-profits screen vision
Idaho	N	N	No state requirements	
Illinois	Y	Y	Annual screening for preschool children 3 years of age or older in any public/ private preschool or licensed childcare facility, and in grades K, 2 and 8, transfer students, special education students, students referred by teachers– in all public, private and parochial schools	
Indiana	N	Y	Kindergarten or grade 1, grades 3, 5 and 8, students transferred in grades 3 and 8 and for students suspected of having a visual defect	
Iowa	N	Y	At least once before enrollment in kindergarten and again before enrollment in the 3rd grade. 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 six months after date of enrollment	
Kansas	N	Y	At least once every 2 years while enrolled in public school	
Kentucky	Y	Y	Eye exams for all children ages 3–6 entering public preschool/ Head Start/public school for the first time, performed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist Vision screening prior to first enrollment and entry into grade 6 (and grade 9 at the school's discretion)	

STATE	Pre-School	School - Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
Louisiana	N	Y	Required annually for all students and in accordance with the schedule established by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Required for students suspected of having dyslexia	Guidelines currently under review
Maine	Y	Y	Preschool, kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9	Distance acuity shall be screened in preschool, kindergarten and grades, 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 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
Maryland	Y	Y	Pre-K and K, upon entry, first grade, and grades 8 or 9	
Massachusetts	Y	Y	Upon entering kindergarten or once within the 12 months prior to K entry Required annually kindergarten through grade 5 (or by age 11 in ungraded classrooms), once in grades 6 through 8 (or ages 12 through 14 in ungraded classrooms) and once in grades 9 through 12 (or ages 15 through 18 in ungraded classrooms)	Eye exam required for children with neurodevelopmental delay diagnosis; required for school entry for children that did not pass a screening in previous school
Michigan	Y	Y	Pre-K once during ages 3 to 5 years; grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 or grades 1, 3, 5, 7 and in conjunction with driver training	
Minnesota	Y	N	Early childhood developmental screening at least once before school entrance, targeting children who are between three and four years old (includes vision screening)	

STATE	Pre-School	School - Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
Mississippi	Y	Y	Pre-K, and K within the first 45 days of the school year	
Missouri	N	N	No state requirements	Vision screening is recommended and the state issues guidelines
Montana	N	N	No state requirements	No current requirement but recommended on a periodic basis
Nebraska	Y	Y	Periodic, annual screening for ages 3–5 years Eye exam required within 6 months prior to school or upon transfer, and grades 1–4, 7, and 10	
Nevada	N	Y	Required before entry in elementary school and one additional grade in elementary school, one grade in middle or junior high school, and one grade of high school, transfer students, special education students, and referrals	
New Hampshire	N	N	No state requirements	Recommends a complete vision exam for all students within first year of entry or transfer and screening for pre-K, K and 1st grade
New Jersey	N	Y	Biennially in K through grade 10	
New Mexico	Y	Y	Pre-K, K, grades 1 and 3, and transfers	
New York	Y	Y	Pre-K, K, grades, 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, and at any other time deemed necessary shall be screened for distance acuity	
North Carolina	N	Y	Every child entering kindergarten in the public schools (within 180 days)	For children who receive and do not pass a vision screening as required under the law, a comprehensive eye examination is required

STATE	Pre-School	School - Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
North Dakota	N	N	No state requirements	Some guidelines available
Ohio	N	Y	K or first entry, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, referrals	Pre-K: state guidelines for screening are available
Oklahoma	N	Y	K, grades 1 and 3	
Oregon	Y	Y	Pre-K, K, age 7 or younger, grades 1, 2 or 3; 4 or 5; 7 or 8, 10 or 11; first entry into school, driver education student, upon entrance into special education, referrals	
Pennsylvania	N	Y	K, grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 11	Guidelines under review
Rhode Island	Y	Y	Kindergarten or first entry (including preschool), grades 1-5, 7, and 9	
South Carolina	N	N	No state requirements	Vision screening is recommended
South Dakota	N	N	No state requirements	
Tennessee	N	N		Public schools, nursery schools, kindergartens, preschools, and childcare facilities are encouraged to inform parents about the benefits of eye care. LEAs are encouraged to seek free or reduced-cost eye examinations for children unable to afford care. The commissioner is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to implement this section.
Texas	Y	Y	Required for first entry after age 4 years, grades 1, 3, 5, 7	
Utah	Y	Y	PK, K, grades 1, 3, 5, 7 or 8, and 9 or 10; mandatory screening for students being evaluated and reevaluated for special education	New legislation passed in 2019. State Department of Health currently writing standards and procedures

STATE	Pre-School	School - Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
Vermont	Y	Y	Pre-K, K, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12	
Virginia	N	Y	K, grades 2 or 3, 7, and 10	
Washington	N	Y	K, grades 1, 2, 3, 5. 7 and referrals	
West Virginia	N	Y	All children entering public school for the first time shall receive vision screening prior to enrollment	The state Board of Education is authorized to promulgate rules
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	

Please send us an email if you have an update on vision screening legislation in your state. info@preventblindness.org

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