

VISION AND EYE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS BY STATE

The information in the chart below was compiled based on information available at the time of publication. States with a Y means that there is legislation, rule, code or requirement for vision screening or an eye examination. Guidelines or recommendations, unless indicated as rules in the code, are not included in this chart but many states that have no legislation or requirements do have guidelines and some state allocate/provide funding for vision screening. We encourage readers to reference the most current published legislative code and recommendations and guidance from your state public health and/or education departments as state policies can change. At the time of publication we are aware of several states reviewing current requirements; this is indicated in the “Other Information” column.

The NCCVEH thanks our partner, The Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, for their research of state codes.

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	
Arizona	Y*	Y	First entry to school and at no more that 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
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	N	Y	K, grades 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, and children referred for screening	
Connecticut	Y	Y	Pre-K, K, grades 1, 3, 4 and 5 and required as part of a health assessment (received in community) upon first entry and for grades 6 or 7 and 9 or 10	
Delaware	Y	Y	First entry, K, grades 2, 4, 7, and 9 or 10, transfer students, students referred by teacher/administrator, students considered for special education, and driver education students prior to in-car 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	Physical exam required prior to entry into school system (preschool or school age) and at 7th grade; includes basic vision status	* Required if a public school offers a preschool program
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 child care 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 ophthalmologist or optometrist Vision screening prior to first enrollment and entry into grade 6 (and grade 9 at the school’s discretion)	
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

STATE	Pre-School	School-Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
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	Required before entry to Kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9/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)	
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 Eye exam required within six 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	Y	Y	Pre-K and required biennially for students in Kindergarten through grade 10	
New Mexico	Y	Y	Pre-K, kindergarten, grades 1 and 3, and transfers	
New York	Y	Y	Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1, 3, 5, 7, 10 and at any other time deemed necessary shall be screened for distance acuity	

STATE	Pre-School	School-Age	Frequency of Required Screening	Other Information
North Carolina	Y*	Y	Kindergarten, or enrolling in the public school for the first time as part of health assessment within 12 months of entry	*Required for entry into Pre-K in Title I preschool programs
North Dakota	N	N	No state requirements	Some guidelines available
Ohio	N	Y	K or first entry, 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	Required annually (K-12)	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		Recommendations for vision screening in grades Pre-K, K, 2, 4, 6, and 8.
Texas	Y	Y	Required for first entry after age 4, grades 1, 3, 5, 7.	
Utah	Y	Y	PK, K, 1, 3, 5, 7th or 8th, and 9th or 10th grades; 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
Vermont	Y	Y	Pre-K, K, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12	
Virginia	N	Y	Kindergarten, grades 2 or 3, 7, and 10	
Washington	N	Y	K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, referrals	
West Virginia	Y	Y	Prior to first entry, K, 2, 7	
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 feel you have an update on vision screening regulations in your state.
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