

# APPROPRIATE VISION SCREENING TOOL EXAMPLES

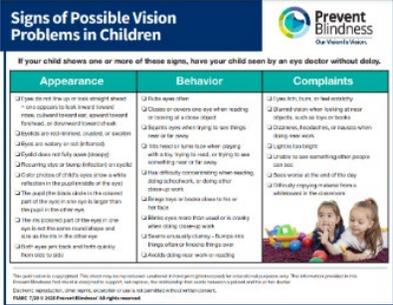
States, and even separate school districts within states, have varying vision screening procedures and protocols. The following information provides examples of evidence-based tools.



For answers to questions – [nottingham@preventblindness.org](mailto:nottingham@preventblindness.org)

## OBSERVATION / CHECKLIST APPROACH

OCTOBER 2025

TEST	AGES	TOOLS	OPTOTYPES	PASS	NOTES AND TIPS
Observation	All	<p>Signs of Possible Vision Problems in Children</p>  <p><b>English:</b>  <a href="https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/10/5A-Signs-vision-problems-in-children.pdf">https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/10/5A-Signs-vision-problems-in-children.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Spanish:</b>  <a href="https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/10/5B-Spanish-Signs-of-possible-vision-problems.pdf">https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/10/5B-Spanish-Signs-of-possible-vision-problems.pdf</a></p>	Observation/ checklist tool	Nothing seen	Children with one or more signs from screener observation, and/or parental or teacher concerns, should be referred for a comprehensive eye examination, even if the child passes vision screening tools.

TEST

18 Key Vision Developmental Milestones - Checklist

AGES

Birth to 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday

TOOLS

18 Vision Development Milestones from Birth to Baby's First Birthday

**18 Vision Development Milestones From Birth to Baby's First Birthday**  
P. Kay Nottingham Chaplin, EdD – Kira Baklanoff, BA

**About the tool**  
This document is a vision screening tool for babies aged 0-12 months. It is designed to be used by parents and caregivers to monitor their child's vision development. It is not a substitute for a professional eye examination.

**How to use the tool**  
1. Read the instructions carefully.  
2. Use the tool in a well-lit room.  
3. Hold the child's head steady.  
4. Observe the child's eyes and face for the listed milestones.  
5. Record the results on the checklist.

**Interpretation**  
If you observe any of the milestones listed in red, it may indicate a vision problem. Contact your pediatrician or an eye care professional for further evaluation. If you observe all milestones in green, it is a good sign that your child's vision is developing normally.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE (Milestone may vary by 1 month)	MILESTONE	QUESTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Birth through 1 <sup>st</sup> month	Baby begins to focus on light, face, and objects 8 to 15 inches (20-38 cm) away from her/his face.	Does baby focus on light, face, and objects 8 to 15 inches (20-38 cm) away from her/his face? Yes/No Date for recheck: _____	Refer to baby's primary health care provider for further evaluation and to coordinate referral for an eye examination.
1 to 3 months	Baby begins to follow slowly moving light, face, and objects in air.	Is baby beginning to follow slowly moving light, face, and objects with her/his head and eyes? Yes/No Date for recheck: _____	Refer to baby's 3 Early Development Program.
3 to 6 months	Baby begins to follow quickly moving light, face, and objects in air.	Is baby beginning to follow quickly moving light, face, and objects with her/his head and eyes? Yes/No Date for recheck: _____	Advise parents and caregivers to: - Look at your baby and move your head from side to side. Play together and have fun! - Hold a patterned high-contrast toy within 15 inches (38 cm) of your baby's face. Show her/him the object up and down or side to side. Play together and have fun! - Place a small disk of colorful plastic rings in your baby's hands and gently shake your baby's hands in front of your baby's face. Play together and have fun!
6 to 12 months	Baby begins to follow quickly moving light, face, and objects in air.	Is baby beginning to follow quickly moving light, face, and objects with her/his head and eyes? Yes/No Date for recheck: _____	

Next Milestone Due: Age 6 and 12 months

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Expert Contributors:**

**Sandra Block, OD, Med. MPH, FAAO, FCOVD**  
- Member of National Expert Panel to the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health (NCCV/EH) to Prevent Blindness  
- Professor Medical Director, School Basic Clinical, Director of School Based Research at Illinois College of Optometry

**Deborah Chen, PhD**  
- Professor Emerita in Early Childhood Social Acquisition, Department of Special Education, California State University Northridge  
- Coeditor with Gail Cavell and Gail Farrow, Publishers of the Parents and Infants with Visual Impairment (PAIVI) Manual, created as a 3-year project of the same name, funded with support from the U.S. Department of Education

**Megan E. Collins, MD, Pediatric Ophthalmologist**  
- Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, Harvard Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins Medicine  
- A Pediatric Investigator of the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health

**Sean Collier, OD, MS, FAAO**  
- Member of National Expert Panel to the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health (NCCV/EH) to Prevent Blindness  
- Member of Advisory Committee to the NCCV/EH  
- Professor at the Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University

**Ann S. Nelson, PhD**  
- Outreach Coordinator, Kansas State School for the Blind, Manhattan, Kansas, USA

OPTOTYPES

Observation/ checklist tool  
Includes parent and caregiver activities

PASS

Follow instructions

NOTES AND TIPS

Available in English and Spanish.  
Begin with 1<sup>st</sup> milestone regardless of infant's age to determine all milestones were met.  
Use tool monthly.

English

[https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/05/18-Key-vision-questions-to-ask-in-year-1\\_version-5.27.2020.pdf](https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/05/18-Key-vision-questions-to-ask-in-year-1_version-5.27.2020.pdf)

Spanish

[https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/06/Spanish\\_18-Key-vision-questions-to-ask-in-year-1\\_version-5.27.2020-1.pdf](https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/06/Spanish_18-Key-vision-questions-to-ask-in-year-1_version-5.27.2020-1.pdf)

Poster for Parents/Guardians

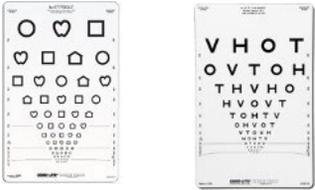
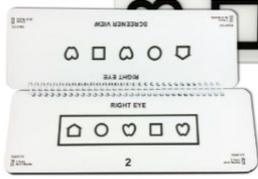
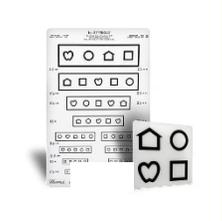
English

[https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/05/18visiondevelop-mentmilestones\\_FINAL\\_4.20.20.pdf](https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/05/18visiondevelop-mentmilestones_FINAL_4.20.20.pdf)

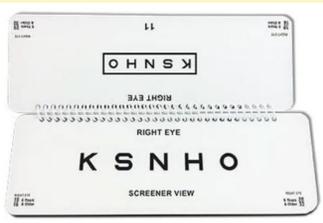
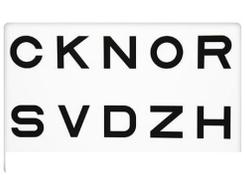
Spanish

<https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/07/ESPmilestones8.5x11.pdf>

# OPTOTYPE-BASED SCREENING APPROACH

TEST	AGES	TOOLS	OPTOTYPES	PASS	NOTES AND TIPS
<p>Distance Visual Acuity</p>	<p>3, 4, 5, and 6 years</p>	<p>EyE Check Flipbooks at 5 feet</p>  <p>Vision in Preschoolers (VIP) Kit with Illuminator Cabinet and Disk Cards at 5 feet</p>  <p>9 x 14 charts at 10 feet – full threshold or critical line</p>  <p>LEA SYMBOLS® portion of Sight Line at 10 feet in critical line format</p> 	<p>LEA SYMBOLS® or HOTV letters</p> <p>Additional 9 x 14 charts</p>   <p>Response panels for playing a matching game.</p>  	<p>3yo – 20/50</p> <p>4 yo – 20/40</p> <p>5yo and older – 20/32</p>	<p>Screen annually.</p> <p>9x14 charts should have a 20/32 line, not 20/30.</p> <p>Measure a 5-foot or 10-foot screening distance between the chart and the child's eyes, depending on the tool.</p> <p>Place arches of the child's feet on the line when measuring, not heels or toes. Or end measuring distance at the back of a chair.</p> <p>Screen one eye at a time.</p> <p>Rescreen as soon as possible and no later than 2 weeks.</p> <p>Refer to an eye care provider (pediatric optometrist, optometrist, pediatric ophthalmologist, or ophthalmologist) with experience examining young children.</p> <p>You can use 9 x 14 charts in an illuminated cabinet (e.g., ESV1200 below) or place on a wall in a well-lit room.</p> 

**OPTOTYPE-BASED SCREENING APPROACH (Continued)**

TEST	AGES	TOOLS	OPTOTYPES	PASS	NOTES AND TIPS
<p>Distance Visual Acuity</p>	<p>Beginning at age 6 or 7 years, depending on when children can identify letters in random order</p>	<p>Sloan letters</p> <p>If you draw a line around the outside of the optotypes, the line will resemble an upside-down pyramid and not a rectangle.</p> <p>No more than 5 optotypes per line, unless using a 9" x 14" chart.</p> <p>Test of visual acuity should be 10 feet, not 20 feet, AND should have a 20/32 line, not a 20/30 line.</p> <p>Sloan letters chart</p>  <p>Sloan letters portion of Sight Line at 10 feet in critical line format</p> 	<p>Sloan letters</p> <p>Response panel of Sloan Letters for students who use English as a second language and may need to match optotypes.</p> 	<p>3 out of 5 optotypes on the 20/32 line with each eye individually</p>	<p>Bright Futures recommends vision screening for well-child medical visits at ages 8, 10, 12, and 15 years.</p> <p>Measure the 10-foot screening distance between the chart and the child's eyes.</p> <p>Place the arch of the child's foot on the line when measuring the 10-foot distance, not heels or toes., or back of chair if child is sitting.</p> <p>Screen one eye at a time.</p> <p>Rescreen as soon as possible and no later than 2 weeks.</p> <p>Refer to an eye care provider (pediatric optometrist, optometrist, pediatric ophthalmologist, or ophthalmologist) with experience examining school-age children.</p> <p>You can use a 9 x 14 Sloan Letters chart in an illuminated cabinet (e.g., ESV1200 below) or place it on a wall in a well-lit room.</p> 

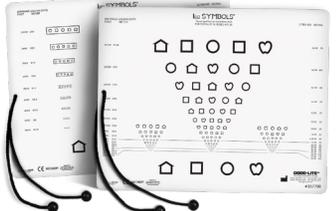
## OPTOTYPE-BASED SCREENING APPROACH (Continued)

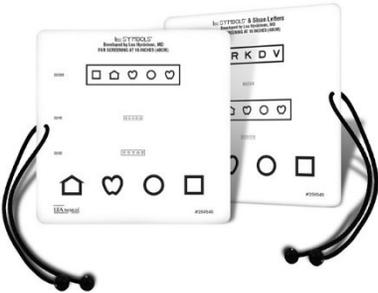
TEST	AGES	TOOLS	OPTOTYPES	PASS	NOTES AND TIPS
Distance Visual Acuity	All ages beginning at age 3 years	<p>Tests of visual acuity at 10 feet for threshold and critical line screening.</p> <p>AAPOS Basic Vision Screening Kit</p> 	<p>LEA SYMBOLS<sup>®</sup> and Sloan Letters</p> <p>Also available with HOTV and Sloan letters</p>	Follow the instructions in the kits	<p>Measure the 10-foot screening distance between the chart and the child's eyes.</p> <p>Place the arch of the child's foot on the line when measuring the 10-foot distance, not heels or toes, or back of chair if the child is sitting.</p> <p>Screen one eye at a time.</p> <p>Rescreen as soon as possible and no later than 2 weeks.</p> <p>Refer to an eye care provider (pediatric optometrist, optometrist, pediatric ophthalmologist, or ophthalmologist) with experience examining preschool and school-age children.</p>

### INSTRUMENT-BASED SCREENING APPROACH

- For ages 1 and 2 years.
- As an alternative for optotype-based screening for ages 3, 4, and 5 years, with an evidence-based eye chart and approved occluders as a backup if an instrument reading cannot be captured.
- Not currently recommended for ages 6 years and older because of insufficient data.
- Prevent Blindness does not provide information on specific devices to use, but can provide technical assistance on what to look for when purchasing devices.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MISCELLANEOUS MANDATED SCREENING COMPONENTS

TEST	AGES	TOOLS	OPTOTYPES	PASS	NOTES AND TIPS
<p>Near visual acuity screening</p> <p>Critical line</p> <p>Binocularly</p>	3, 4, and 5 years	<p>LEA SYMBOLS® near chart with 16-inch cord</p>  <p>ATS 4 HOTV near flipbook</p> 	LEA SYMBOLS® or HOTV letters	<p>Correct identification of 3 optotypes on age-matched lines</p> <p>3 yo – 20/50 line</p> <p>4 yo – 20/40 line</p> <p>5 yo – 20/32 line</p>	<p>Conduct binocular critical line screening annually, even if using an instrument.</p> <p>Hold cord at child's temple.</p> <p>Ensure the cord remains tight to prevent the child from moving closer to or farther away from the chart.</p>
<p>Near visual acuity screening</p> <p>Critical line</p> <p>Binocularly</p>	6 years and older or when children know letters in random order	<p>Sloan letters</p> 	Sloan letters	<p>Correct identification of 3 optotypes on 20/32 line</p>	<p>Can conduct full threshold screening (starting at top line and moving down the chart) one eye at a time OR critical line screening with each eye individually, or with both eyes open.</p> <p>Hold cord at child's temple.</p> <p>Ensure the cord remains tight to prevent the child from moving closer to or farther away from the chart.</p>

<p>Near visual acuity screening</p> <p>Critical line</p> <p>Binocularly</p>	<p>3 years and older, including 6 years and older</p>	<p>LEA SYMBOLS® and Sloan letters near critical line chart with 16-inch cord</p> 	<p>LEA SYMBOLS® and Sloan letters</p>	<p>Correctly identifying 3 of 5 optotypes for:</p> <p>3yo – 20/50 line</p> <p>4yo – 20/40 line</p> <p>5yo and older – 20/32 line</p>	<p>If using the Sloan letters 20/32 line and the child does not know letters in random order, move down one line on the same side of the chart to the LEA SYMBOLS® 20/32 line for children aged 5 years and older.</p> <p>Hold cord at child's temple.</p> <p>Ensure the cord remains tight to prevent the child from moving closer to or farther away from the chart.</p>
<p>Stereopsis Screening</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>PASS Test™ 2</p> 	<p>NA</p>	<p>3yo and 4yo – pass Card B (no testing with Card C)</p> <p>5yo and older – pass Cards B and C</p>	<p>If student wears prescription glasses and you do not know the reason, place polarized glasses over prescription glasses when screening. You may need a larger set of polarized glasses. If the child cannot see the 3-D image, then try conducting the test without the child wearing their glasses.</p> <p>Ensure no glare or shadow on cards. Hold cards with edges of fingertips. Tilt cards slightly backward – about a 10-degree tilt.</p>
<p>Color Vision Deficiency Screening</p>	<p>3 years and older</p>	<p>HRR Color Screening Book</p> 	<p>Symbols and letters</p>	<p>Follow manufacturer instructions</p>	<p>Replace book every 7 years; colors desaturate over time.</p> <p>Use cotton swab or brush for pointing or tracing the image as oil from fingertips will desaturate colors.</p> <p>Ensure tool selected is for screening purposes only vs. a diagnostic tool.</p>

<p>Color Vision Deficiency Screening</p>	<p>3 years and older</p>	<p>Waggoner Color Vision Testing Made Easy</p> 	<p>Symbols</p>	<p>Follow manufacturer instructions</p>	<p>Replace book every 7 years; colors desaturate over time.</p> <p>Use cotton swab or brush for pointing or tracing the image as oil from fingertips will desaturate colors.</p> <p>Ensure tool selected is for screening purposes only vs. a diagnostic tool.</p>
<p>Occluders</p>	<p>3 years to 10 years</p>	<p>Adhesive tape or occluder glasses</p> 	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p><u>Preferred</u> occluders = Adhesive patches (with narrow end toward nose) or occluder glasses.</p> <p><u>Unacceptable</u> occluders = Tissues, hands, paper or plastic cups, paper occluders, adults holding occluders over the child's eyes, and occluder paddles.</p>
<p>Occluders</p>	<p>10 years and older</p>	<p>"Mardi Gras" mask or "Lollipop" occluders.</p> 	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p><u>Unacceptable</u> occluders = Tissues, hands, paper or plastic cups, paper occluders, adults holding occluders over the child's eyes.</p> <p>Hold "lollipop" occluders with the handle toward the temple, not the chin.</p>



# Vision Screening Certification

Information for Prevent Blindness's nationally recognized online vision screening certification course, which you can complete online at your own pace.

Earn a 3-year national certification and 5 contact hours for professional development.

## Prevent Blindness Children's Vision Screening Certification Course

<https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/prevent-blindness-childrens-vision-screening-certification-course/>

Questions? [info@preventblindness.org](mailto:info@preventblindness.org) [800] 331.2020



**National Center  
for Children's Vision  
and Eye Health**

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