

Comprehensive checklist for planning a tier one vision screening

Use this checklist to plan and conduct a school-based tier one vision screening. Screening must follow current Utah Department of Health and Human Services vision screening requirements and procedures.

Before screening day

Assign the designated vision point person

☐ Identify the DVPP for the school.

The DVPP is responsible for coordinating the school vision screening process. Responsibilities may include:

- Verifying training
- Planning the screening
- Coordinating staff, volunteers, and outside entities
- Managing parent notification and opt-outs
- Reviewing results
- Coordinating rescreening and referrals
- Supporting follow-up
- Coordinating VSQ processes when required
- Ensuring annual reporting is completed

The DVPP should be the school nurse when one is available. If a school nurse is not available, the LEA must assign another school staff member to coordinate the program.

Complete and verify training

☐ Confirm that the DVPP has completed or reviewed the current DHHS school vision screening training.

☐ Confirm that each staff member or volunteer assisting with screening has completed annual training through:

- The current DHHS online training course, or
- Training provided by a school nurse using DHHS-approved materials

☐ Maintain documentation showing who completed training and the date completed.

☐ Match each participant to the duties they are trained and authorized to perform.

Volunteers may assist with tier one screening only. Tier two screening requires separate training and must be conducted by an authorized tier two screener.

Coordinate with school administration

☐ Schedule screening early enough in the school year to allow time for rescreening, referral, and follow-up.

☐ Confirm the screening date or general screening window.

☐ Reserve an appropriate screening location.

☐ Determine how classrooms and students will be scheduled.

☐ Determine how absent or tardy students will be identified and screened later.

Notify parents or guardians

☐ Notify parents or guardians before scheduled vision screening.

The notification should include:

- The screening date or general screening window
- A brief explanation of the screening
- A reminder that screening does not replace a complete eye examination
- Instructions for submitting an annual written opt-out
- A school contact for questions

☐ Record all written opt-outs received for the current school year.

Create the tier one screening list

☐ Create the screening list using the required grades and referral criteria described in the policy.

☐ Identify students who may be exempt:

- A student in grade 10 who is enrolled in driver education may be exempt.
- A student with a diagnosed significant vision impairment is exempt from school vision screening.

☐ Remove students whose parents or guardians submitted a written opt-out for the current school year.

☐ Identify students who may need accommodations or an alternative screening process.

Plan staffing and volunteers

☐ Determine the number of screening stations needed.

☐ Determine the number of staff members or volunteers needed.

Whenever possible, use two trained adults for each screening station:

- One person conducts the screening.
- One person observes student positioning, prevents peeking, and records results.

☐ Never use students as vision screeners.

☐ Provide volunteers with their arrival time, assignment, and training expectations.

☐ Review confidentiality expectations with everyone assisting with screening.

Plan for an outside entity, when applicable

☐ Use only a DHHS-approved qualified outside entity.

☐ Confirm that the outside entity is contracted or formally authorized by the LEA.

☐ Confirm that the outside entity will assist with tier one screening only.

☐ Assign an LEA staff member or the DVPP to remain present during the entire screening.

☐ Confirm how screening results will be provided to the LEA.

☐ Confirm that the outside entity will not advertise, market services, distribute promotional materials, or seek financial benefit during screening.

Select the screening method and equipment

☐ Use only DHHS-approved screening tools and procedures.

For chart-based screening, confirm that the chart:

- Uses approved optotypes, such as Sloan letters, HOTV letters, or LEA SYMBOLS®
- Is proportionately spaced
- Is designed for the required screening distance
- Includes a 20/32 line, not a 20/30 line
- Has not been altered, marked, underlined, boxed, or written on

☐ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the specific chart or screening tool.

☐ Determine whether screeners will use the critical line method or the full threshold method with the selected chart.

- Critical line: Begin directly at the age- or grade-appropriate passing line and record pass or does not pass.
- Full threshold: Move down the chart line by line to identify the visual acuity level for each eye and check for a 2-line difference between the eyes.

☐ Make sure all screeners use the same selected method and follow the instructions for that method.

☐ Use instrument-based screening only when permitted by DHHS policy and when the student cannot reliably complete standard chart-based screening.

An instrument-based device does not directly measure visual acuity and should not be documented as a 20/20-style visual acuity result.

Plan how results will be recorded

☐ Select the screening record or electronic system that will be used.

☐ Decide who will record results.

☐ Record an outcome for every student scheduled for screening, including:

- Pass
- Does not pass
- Unable to complete
- Absent
- Opted out
- Exempt
- Rescreen needed
- Referred

Do not assume that a blank result means the student passed.

☐ Establish a secure process for protecting student information and screening results.

Plan for rescreening and referrals

☐ Determine who will review screening results.

☐ Plan to rescreen students who are unable to complete the screening or whose results may have been affected by participation, positioning, missing glasses, or another correctable issue.

☐ Conduct rescreening as soon as possible, either the same day or no later than 14 calendar days

☐ Establish a process for referring students who:

- Do not pass screening
- Remain unable to complete screening

- Show signs of a possible vision problem
- Have a parent, guardian, teacher, or school concern requiring referral
- Need tier two screening but the LEA does not have an authorized tier two screener

- ☐ Determine who will provide the referral packet and parent or guardian notification.
- ☐ Establish a distinct follow-up process that is separate from the written initial referral notification. Plan who will directly contact the parent or guardian, confirm receipt of the referral, provide resources and instructions for obtaining follow-up vision care, and document the contact.

Screening room setup

- ☐ Choose a quiet area with limited distractions.
- ☐ Provide even lighting without glare on the chart.
- ☐ Protect student privacy and prevent other students from hearing or watching the screening.
- ☐ Position waiting students so they cannot see the chart or memorize responses.
- ☐ Hang or hold the chart at the student's eye level, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ☐ Measure the screening distance from the chart to the student's eyes.
- ☐ Mark the standing position so the arches of the student's feet align with the measured line.
- ☐ If the student will sit, measure to the back of the chair and have the student sit with their back against the chair.
- ☐ Arrange the room so students cannot lean forward during screening.

Supplies

- ☐ DHHS-approved charts or screening tools
- ☐ Manufacturer's instructions
- ☐ Measuring cord or tape measure
- ☐ Floor tape or footprints
- ☐ Approved occluders
- ☐ Matching cards or response panels, when needed
- ☐ Pointer
- ☐ Cleaning and disinfecting supplies
- ☐ Waste container, if disposable occluders or patches are used
- ☐ Student screening lists
- ☐ Recording forms or electronic device
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ Referral forms and parent packets
- ☐ Privacy barriers, when needed

Day of the screening

Final checks before students arrive

- ☐ Confirm that all screeners and volunteers completed training.
- ☐ Review each person's assigned role.
- ☐ Confirm that an LEA staff member or the DVPP will be present throughout the screening.
- ☐ Confirm that charts are unaltered and correctly positioned.

- ☐ Recheck the screening distance.
- ☐ Check the room for glare, distractions, and privacy concerns.
- ☐ Confirm that recording forms and student lists are ready.
- ☐ Review how absent, opted-out, and exempt students will be documented.

Prepare the student

- Welcome the student and briefly explain the activity.
- Use child-friendly language. For younger students, describe the screening as a game with pictures or letters rather than a test.
- Familiarize the student with the optotypes before covering either eye.
- Make sure the student can identify or match the letters or symbols being used.

Position the student

- Position the student's eyes at the required screening distance.
- If the student is standing, align the arches of the student's feet with the marked line.
- Keep the student's head and body facing forward.

Do not allow the student to:

- Lean forward
- Turn the face
- Tilt the head
- Squint
- Peek around the occluder

Screen each eye separately

- Cover the left eye and screen the right eye first.
- Cover the right eye and screen the left eye.
- Make sure the covered eye remains open behind the occluder.
- Do not allow the student or the occluder to press on the eye.

Students who wear glasses or contact lenses

- Screen students while they are wearing their prescribed glasses or contact lenses.
- Place approved occluder glasses or another appropriate occluder over prescription glasses, following the tool instructions.
- If a student does not have their prescribed glasses, document this. The student may be screened, but if the student does not pass, rescreen when the glasses are available.

Use the point, pull, peek method

- Point briefly to the optotype.

- Pull the pointer completely away.
- Peek at the student to make sure the student is not leaning, squinting, or peeking.
- Do not leave a finger or pointer under an optotype while the student responds.

Follow the selected screening method

Follow the instructions for the specific chart or screening tool.

- Critical line screening: Screen the age-appropriate passing line for each eye.
- Full threshold screening: Move down the chart as instructed to identify the visual acuity level for each eye and check for a 2-line difference between the eyes.

Determine whether the student passes

The student must correctly identify at least 3 of 5 optotypes on the required line with each eye screened separately.

Use the following minimum passing lines:

- Age 3: 20/50
- Age 4: 20/40
- Age 5 and older: 20/32

Record the results

Record a result for each eye.

- For critical line screening, record:
 - Pass, does not pass, or unable to complete for each eye
- For full threshold screening, record:
 - The visual acuity level for each eye labeled as 20/___.

Refer when needed

Refer the student to an eye care professional when the student:

- Does not meet the passing requirement with either eye
- Remains unable to complete screening after an appropriate rescreen
- Has a 2-line difference between the eyes when full threshold screening is used
- Shows signs of a possible vision problem, even if the student passes the chart screening
- Has another concern that requires evaluation by an eye care professional

Protect confidentiality

- Do not discuss screening results where other students, volunteers, or unauthorized individuals can hear.
- Do not announce whether a student passed or did not pass in front of other students.
- Share results only through the school's approved process.

After the screening

Review and verify results

- ☐ Confirm that every student on the screening list has a documented outcome.
- ☐ Verify results that indicate the student did not pass, when required by the school process.
- ☐ Identify students needing rescreening.
- ☐ Identify students needing referral.
- ☐ Identify students who were absent and schedule another screening opportunity.

Rescreen

- ☐ Rescreen appropriate students as soon as possible, preferably the same day or within 14 calendar days.
- ☐ Record the rescreening date and results.
- ☐ Refer students who remain unable to complete screening or who do not pass the rescreen.

Parent or guardian notification and referral

- ☐ Provide the parent or guardian with the written initial referral notification within 30 calendar days of the vision screening.
- ☐ Use the current DHHS-approved referral form.
- ☐ Document the screening results and recommend further evaluation by an eye care professional.
- ☐ Provide information about available community resources when appropriate.

A qualified outside entity may provide additional resource information to the family at the same time as, or after, the LEA provides the written initial referral notification. The LEA remains responsible for the required referral and separate follow-up contact.

Required separate follow-up

The follow-up contact is separate from and does not replace the written initial referral notification.

- ☐ Directly contact the parent or guardian by telephone, email, or another LEA-approved communication method.
- ☐ Confirm that the parent or guardian received the written initial referral notification.
- ☐ Provide:
 - Information about available resources
 - Instructions for obtaining follow-up vision care
 - Any applicable resource information from a qualified outside entity
- ☐ Document:
 - The date of contact
 - The method of contact
 - Whether the parent or guardian confirmed receiving the referral
 - Resources or instructions provided
 - Additional contact attempts, when needed
 - Eye examination results received by the school

Documentation and reporting

☐ Document each vision screening result, including any referral and follow-up, in the student's permanent school record.

- Screening results
- Rescreening results
- Parent notifications
- Referrals
- Follow-up attempts
- Eye examination results received
- Opt-outs
- Exemptions
- Absences
- Students unable to complete screening
- Training completion
- VSQs, when applicable

☐ Coordinate annual aggregate vision screening reporting through the Utah School Health Workload Report no later than June 30.

☐ Review the screening program after completion and identify needed improvements for the next screening cycle.