

# Vision Screening

## CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Vision risk assessment or screening is required at all C&TC visits. Early identification in young children can help prevent amblyopia and other vision problems.

### C&TC standards

#### General

Vision **risk assessment** is required at all C&TC visits up to 3 years or until vision screening can be performed. Vision **screening** is required starting at 3 years and at ages as indicated on the [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#).

#### Personnel

Trained clinic personnel, such as nurses and medical assistants, can perform vision screening. A licensed health care provider must interpret the results, perform a physical exam, and ensure appropriate follow-up: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health.

#### Documentation

Document exam findings and screening results. If screening is not completed, state the reason.

Refer to the [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](#) for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

### Procedure

#### Physical exam

Observe external eye, alignment, and presence of nystagmus. Note extraocular movements, red reflex, pupillary light reflex, and corneal light reflex.

#### Risk assessment

Refer to [Child and Family Vision History and Risk Assessment Questionnaire](#).

#### Visual acuity screening

Refer to [Vision Screening Procedures](#).

#### Distance visual acuity recommendations

- Use HOTV or LEA SYMBOLS® wall or flip charts at 10 feet to perform distance visual acuity screening for ages 3-5.
- Use instrument-based vision screening for children 3-5 years who can't perform visual acuity screening with wall charts.
- Use a Sloan wall chart at 10 feet for screening ages 6 and older.
- Ensure children and youth wear their corrective lenses for the screening.
- Wall charts are the gold standard for distance visual acuity screening.

## Near visual acuity (plus lens)

Perform near visual acuity screening at 10 feet using 2.50 plus lens for children 5 years and older who pass distance visual acuity screening and do not use corrective lenses.

## Importance of anticipatory guidance

Identifying vision abnormalities early can prevent amblyopia, a potentially lifelong, permanent vision problem (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2017).

## Professional recommendations

### American Academy of Pediatrics

Vision risk assessment begins at birth and continues throughout childhood. Begin visual acuity screening at 3 years (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2025).

### United States Preventive Services Task Force

Vision screening is recommended at least once for all children between 3-5 years (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2017).

## Vision screening mandate

[Minnesota Statute § 121A.17](#) requires children ages 3-5 to receive vision screening before public school kindergarten entry.

## Resources

### Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)

### Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)

## Other resources

- [American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus](#)
- [National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health](#)
- [National Eye Institute](#)

## For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email [health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us](mailto:health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us).

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## Resource links

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)  
(<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG>)
- [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources)  
(<https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources>)
- [Child and Family Vision History and Risk Assessment Questionnaire](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childrencyouth/ctc/visioncreen/childvisnquestre.pdf)  
([www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childrencyouth/ctc/visioncreen/childvisnquestre.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childrencyouth/ctc/visioncreen/childvisnquestre.pdf))
- [Vision Screening Procedures](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrencyouth/ctc/visioncreen/procedures.html)  
([www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrencyouth/ctc/visioncreen/procedures.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrencyouth/ctc/visioncreen/procedures.html))
- [Minnesota Statute § 121A.17](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.17)  
([www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.17](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.17))
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)  
(<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG>)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)  
([www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_DYNAMIC\\_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16\\_150092](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092))
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)  
([www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm))
- [American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus](http://www.aapos.org/home)  
([www.aapos.org/home](http://www.aapos.org/home))
- [National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health](https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/)  
(<https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/>)
- [National Eye Institute \(www.nei.nih.gov\)](http://www.nei.nih.gov)

## References

- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2025, February). *Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care*. Retrieved from [https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity\\_schedule.pdf](https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity_schedule.pdf)
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2017, September 5). *Vision in Children Ages 6 Months to 5 Years: Screening*. Retrieved from [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/vision-in-children-ages-6-months-to-5-years-screening](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/vision-in-children-ages-6-months-to-5-years-screening)