

# Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

## Recommended Procedures for Hearing, Vision and Oral/Dental Checks

Developmental Screenings reported for reimbursement must provide the Child Health Record which includes health, hearing, vision and oral/dental information as well as verification of immunizations. The functional hearing, vision and dental screening will be waived for virtual screenings provided during COVID-19.

### Hearing Check

The following procedures are recommended for Hearing

#### Checks Functional Hearing Procedure:

1. Select a quiet area or room for screening with little distraction or noise.
2. Have the parent sit directly in front of child or hold child facing them on their lap.
3. Have parent use a book or quiet toy to gain child's attention to them.
4. Have several noisemakers available – squeeze toys, bells, rattles, etc. Select these carefully to provide a variety of pitch and intensity levels.
  - Squeeze toy: a soft rubber squeeze toy that makes a high pitched sound. Make sure that when you squeeze the toy, direct the toy away from the child so the air from the toy does not blow in the child's direction.
  - Bell: a small bell produces a high soft ring. Compare bells and select the one that is highest and softest.
  - Rattle: An ordinary baby rattle is adequate.

The key is to have a low pitch, medium pitch and high pitch. Other suggested items for noisemakers are: soda can with ice/ rocks, container such as a cup with block inside, noodles in a cup, etc.

5. The Screener is behind child at a 45-degree angle to the side of the child. Choose one of the noisemakers to make the sound. Make sure you are out of child's peripheral vision. Repeat on the other side. Continue through all noisemakers on each side. Depending on the age of the child they should turn in the direction of the noise. The expected response is as follows:
  - Newborn – arousal from sleep or eye widening/eye blinking
  - 3-4 months – rudimentary head turn; wobble of the head even slightly toward sound, eyes widening, stop sucking motion if child has a pacifier
  - 4-7 months – localizes (turns head) to the side only
  - 7-9 months – localizes to the side and directly below
  - 9-13 months – localizes to the side and below
  - 13-16 months – localizes to the side, below and indirectly above
  - 16-21 months – localizes all directions side, below, and above
  - 21-24 months – locates directly to a sound at any angle (Northern and Downs, 2002)

When there appears to be no response, repeat the sound again. Two repetitions should be adequate to establish the fact. Record the results.

**Whisper Test** – Whisper the child's name. Try this on both sides

# Vision Check

The following procedures are recommended for Vision Checks

## Functional Vision Procedure:

The order of presentation is not important.

1. Position yourself directly in front of the child. This can be accomplished with the parent holding the child or the child sitting. Have a pen light available.
  - Blink Reflex – Birth to 1 year only. To check, move open hand from about 18 inches from the infant's face, toward the nose. Do not create air movement by moving too quickly. Pass if the child blinks in response to the approaching hand.
  - Reaching – Notice if the infant can reach appropriately for a desired object placed in front of and off to each side of him/her.
  - Pupillary Response – Tests the degree to which the pupils respond to light. Look at the pupils before beginning. Use a penlight and shine it very briefly from a distance of about 12 inches into one eye to observe if the pupil constricts. Look for the pupil to shrink and return to original size. Repeat for other eye. (Can be difficult with very dark brown eyes)
  - Corneal Light Reflex – Detects eye deviation. Direct penlight at the bridge of the child's nose at a distance of 8-12 inches. Ask or get child to look at the light (if child wears glasses keep them on for this task). Observe where the light reflection appears in each pupil. Pass if the light is reflected in the same position in each pupil.
  - Alternate Cover Test – detects deviation in the alignment of the eyes. Have child focus on a target object (light, your nose, a toy) held 8-12 inches from the child's face at eye level and lined up with child's nose. Place the cover (your hand or a card) over the right eye and observe the left eye for movement. Repeat procedure covering left eye and observe the right eye for movement.
  - Tracking – Hold the penlight or toy 6-12 inches from the child's eyes. Child's head should remain still. Move the light horizontally from left to right slowly. Move the light vertically from top to bottom slowly. Next, try a circular movement. Some children under 1 year will have difficulty with the circular movement, due to development of neck muscles.

## Visual Acuity Procedure:

- Acuity measures the sharpness of one's vision.
- Directions for administration and interpretation of visual acuity screening are included with the purchased screening materials. Consult your school nurse or a local optometrist for materials and/or procedures.
- To perform acuity screenings, the child can cover one eye with his/her hand, an occluder, or wear special glasses that have one eye blocked.
- If the child currently wears glasses, complete this screening with their glasses on.
- Visual acuity screenings are to be completed for children ages 3 years to kindergarten entry.

## Oral/Dental Health Check

The following procedures are required for the dental check.

Position yourself directly in front of the child. This can be accomplished with the parent/guardian holding the child or the child may be sitting. Have a penlight available.

- Look inside the child's mouth.
- Observe the child's face for sores or abnormalities.
- Look at the child's teeth and count them. Document how many teeth have erupted on the health record.
- Inspect gums, tongue and teeth briefly; look for swelling, bleeding, sores, spots on the teeth, or anything else abnormal.
- NOTE--Spots may be white, gray, or brown; there could be tiny holes; or teeth growing in unusual places. If you observe any possible abnormalities, document on the health record.

Additional information can be found on the Missouri Dental Association website: <https://health.mo.gov/living/families/oralhealth/>