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## CHILDREN'S VISION SCREENING

### Why is children's vision screening so important?

- Lazy eye (amblyopia) is preventable, but is still the leading cause of monocular blindness in children.<sup>1</sup>
- An estimated one in 20 preschoolers has a vision problem that could lead to permanent vision loss due to amblyopia, if left untreated.<sup>2</sup>
- An estimated one in four school-aged children has a vision problem.<sup>2</sup>
- Unresolved vision deficits can impair the ability to respond fully to educational instruction.<sup>3</sup>

### Yet, unfortunately ...

- Only about 20% of preschool children have their vision screened through government and private screening programs.<sup>1</sup>
- Pediatricians have been reported to attempt vision screening in only two-thirds of all of their preschool patients, and in only 38% of their 3-year-old patients.<sup>4</sup>

- Only an estimated 14% of children receive comprehensive vision examinations before entering school.<sup>5</sup>

### Why is Prevent Blindness America at the forefront of screening children?

- Prevent Blindness America (PBA) has been a pioneer and leader in children's vision screening since the 1920's.
- PBA is the nation's largest private screener of children's vision. We screened more than 2 million children in 2002-2003.
- PBA is the only national organization that offers standardized vision screening training and certification programs to screening personnel. We've trained and certified thousands of people across the country.

*PBA's children's vision screening methods are among those recommended by:*

- **The American Academy of Ophthalmology<sup>6</sup>**
- **The American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus<sup>6</sup>**
- **The U.S. Maternal and Child Health Bureau and National Eye Institute Task Force on Vision Screening in the Preschool Child<sup>7</sup>**

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Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening training, community and patient service programs and research.

## Prevent Blindness America's children's vision screening (CVS) program

Prevent Blindness America's (PBA's) children's vision screening (CVS) program is aimed at detecting amblyopia and amblyogenic conditions, although many less serious problems are most often detected. No screening program can find every possible vision problem, but the CVS program provides an important safety net for those children most at risk of permanent vision loss. Screening is not a substitute for a professional eye exam—all parents are reminded of the need for periodic professional eye care for their children, regardless of the results of their child's vision screening.

The screening consists of observation for any appearance, behavior or complaint that might suggest a vision problem, a distance visual acuity test with age-appropriate techniques, and a Random Dot E test of stereopsis. Photoscreening may be used for children unable to cooperate with these tests.

**In 2003-2004, PBA screened more than 2 million children in 22 states. An average of 9% of these children were referred for possible eye problems detected during their screenings.**

PBA's CVS program is cost effective. Our average cost to screen a child is only about \$5.00. Actual costs can vary due to a number of local factors.

Prevent Blindness America partners with Vision Service Plan (VSP), providing free eyeglasses

and eye exams to children through the *Sight for Students* program. Families not receiving any government assistance, but who are unable to afford services are eligible. Each year, Prevent Blindness affiliates distribute thousands of vouchers, worth close to \$2 million in services.

### References

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