

Kindergarten News!

Eye exam required for Illinois students

Senate Bill 641 becomes law

"When the Illinois Federation of Teachers asked us to sponsor a bill that would require an eye exam for all children entering kindergarten, we thought it was a great idea and long overdue. Illinois requires health and dental exams. Vision should be included. Good vision is important for reading and learning. We're thrilled Illinois' legislators agreed with us and overwhelmingly supported this law. All children need to see their best to achieve their best in school."

Senator Deanna Demuzio
Representative Jil Tracy
Chief Sponsors of Senate Bill 641

Start school with best vision

Effective January 1, 2008, all children entering kindergarten (or the first grade enrolled in Illinois) in any public, private, or parochial school will need to have an eye examination by an eye doctor. (Public Act 95-0671) This eye exam can be completed up to one year prior to beginning school.

Due October 15th

Proof of an eye exam is due to the child's school by October 15th of the school year. Proof of a separate health exam with the vaccination record is also required by this time. If a school opts for these forms to be submitted by the first day of attendance instead of October 15th, then an eye exam should be completed by the first day of attendance in addition to the other health requirements.

Penalty for non-compliance

Unlike the health exam and proof of vaccinations, a child cannot be excluded from school for non-compliance. A school may withhold a child's report card if the eye exam requirement has not been met.

Vision screening not a substitute

Illinois law confirms a vision screening is *not a substitute* for an eye examination. (Public Act 93-0504) All children can benefit from a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor.

Vision report form needed

The *State of Illinois Eye Examination Report* was released on May 30, 2008. This form is now required for the 2008-2009 school year. Parents should also bring the *Vision First Student Comprehensive Eye and Vision Examination Report* to a child's eye appointment. Parents and teachers need to know a child's visual abilities and eye care needs. A completed Vision First report can also be submitted to a child's school and will assist a child's teacher in providing an excellent educational program.

Illinois' healthcare for all children

The State of Illinois *All Kids* program covers vision care and vision services including routine eye exams by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. For further information on *All Kids*, please call 1-866-ALL-KIDS or visit their website at: www.allkids.com.

Join the "Kids Eyes Count Campaign"

Follow these steps and be a part of our campaign:

1. **Know** that a vision screening is *not a substitute* for an eye examination.
2. **Make** comprehensive eye and vision examinations by an eye doctor part of a child's health care.
3. **Keep** eye care health and good vision habits a priority.

Schedule an eye appointment for your child today.

For the required State of Illinois form and the Vision First report form, or further information, please visit: www.VisionFirstFoundation.org.

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Make a difference in the eyes of a child