

# HEARING & VISION SCREENING



**HEALTH**  
Department



## What Parents Should Know

### What is the Hearing & Vision Screening Program?

Michigan law (The Public Health Code 368 of 1978) requires Allegan County Health Department (ACHD) to provide no cost hearing and vision screenings to preschool and school-age children.

Screenings occur in most Allegan County public, private, and charter schools, preschools and at ACHD clinics by appointment. The program is done in 3 steps over the course of a child's school years:

- Screenings before kindergarten entry.
- Screenings in select grades up to 9th grade.
- As needed, medical referrals for children not passing the screening.

ACHD Public Health Technicians help identify potential concerns related to a child's ear or eye health. They are not doctors and do not diagnose conditions or prescribe treatment. Technicians complete a Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Technician Training Course and receive continuous training.

Screening Requirements	Hearing	Vision
Pre-School	X	X
Kindergarten	X	
1st Grade		X
2nd Grade	X	
3rd Grade		X
4th Grade	X	
5th Grade		X
7th Grade		X
9th Grade		X

### Why screen children's hearing and vision?

Hearing and vision difficulties can affect school performance, speech and language skills, self-esteem, and social development. Regular hearing and vision screenings identify any problems and ensure they are caught early. Screenings are safe and help children get prompt medical care to reduce disease, physical damage to ear/eye and permanent loss of sight or hearing. They also help parents and teachers make accommodations to help children succeed.

## How are hearing and vision screenings performed?

### Vision:

- An age-appropriate vision screening instrument screens for eye muscle imbalance, two-line difference, and clearness of vision. Children with glasses are screened with glasses/contacts on so they are not referred for further medical evaluation unnecessarily.

### Hearing:

- A pure tone audiometer is used. Tones are presented through headphones.



## Will I be notified if a problem is found during my child's screening?

Yes, you will be notified if your child does not pass the screening, is absent, or the technician is unable to screen your child. A referral letter stating the need to follow-up with the appropriate doctor will also be provided. State of Michigan law requires ACHD to request follow-up documentation that a child who has received this referral receives further evaluation by a physician. If a child does not pass an initial hearing screening, they will be rescreened by an ACHD technician at least one month after the initial screening. If a child does not pass the hearing rescreen they will be given an audiogram. If the audiogram is not passed then the ACHD will notify the parents/guardians by mail and referred to follow-up with the appropriate doctor.

## How will I know when my child is screened in school?

Schools are responsible for communicating to parents about when screenings are scheduled. All children are screened unless the school office is notified otherwise by a parent/guardian. An opt-out of screening form is available on the ACHD website for parents/guardians to complete annually for their student(s) if they so choose. Notify the school if your child has an implanted medical device such as a shunt, pacemaker, vagus nerve stimulators for preventing seizures, Baclofen pumps for spinal cord injuries, etc. Children with implanted medical devices will not be screened for hearing because they may be at risk for unintended changes in device settings. Children with cochlear implants also are not screened in school. If your child has a medically implanted device and you would like a hearing screening, contact your physician for a referral to an audiologist.

## Does my child need hearing or vision screening for Kindergarten Entry?

Hearing and vision screening is required by State of Michigan law for kindergarten entry. The ACHD holds free hearing and vision clinics, by appointment only, the first Friday of each month.

## What are signs of hearing or vision problems in a child?

### Vision

- Squints, closes one eye, or tilts head to see
- Droopy eyelids
- Complaints of headaches and/or dizziness
- Holds objects close to the eyes
- Redness, frequent tearing, pain, and/or itching in the eyes

### Hearing

- History of ear infections or drainage
- Wants the television or radio louder
- Misunderstands directions or asks to have things repeated



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## Where can I get more information?

Call: (269) 673-5411

Email: [health-hv@allegancounty.org](mailto:health-hv@allegancounty.org)

[www.allegancounty.org/health](http://www.allegancounty.org/health)

[www.michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs)

