



**Report describing number and proportion of children in each school district who report having had a comprehensive vision exam, disaggregated by age**

Fiscal Year 2017

Report to the Legislature

As required by Minnesota Statute

2015, H.F. No. 1, chapter 3,

article 10, section 2

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## **Cost of Report Preparation**

The total cost for the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to prepare this report was approximately \$1,136.99. Most of these costs involved staff time in creating reports and analyzing data from the Early Learning System and preparing the written report.

Note: this cost estimate does not include each districts' time and resources to interpret or translate materials if necessary, print new forms, collect the data, and report this information to MDE.

Estimated costs are provided in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2015, section 3.197, which requires that at the beginning of a report to the Legislature, the cost of preparing the report must be provided.

## Legislative Charge

Minnesota Statute 2015 H.F. No. 1, chapter 3, article 10, section 2: By January 15, 2017, the commissioner of education must submit to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education a report describing the number and proportion of children in each school district who report having had a comprehensive vision examination, disaggregated by age, at the time of early childhood developmental screening under [Minnesota Statute 2015 121A.17.Subd.3.](#)

A screening program must include at least the following components: developmental assessments, hearing and vision screening or referral, immunization review and referral, the child's height and weight, the date of the child's most recent comprehensive vision examination, if any, identification of risk factors that may influence learning, an interview with the parent about the child, and referral for assessment, diagnosis, and treatment when potential needs are identified. (1)

## Introduction

As of July 1, 2015, Early Childhood Screening programs are to record the date of the child's most recent comprehensive vision exam, if the child received one. [Minnesota Statute 121A.17.Subd. 3 \(b\)](#) defines 'comprehensive vision examination' as an examination performed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. (1) The law does not make a comprehensive vision exam a required component of Early Childhood Screening. The following legislative report will discuss the number and proportion of children in each school district whose parent or guardian report, at the time of Early Childhood Screening, that their child had ever had a comprehensive vision exam between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

The purpose of the Early Childhood Screening program is to assist parents and communities to improve the educational readiness and health of all young children in Minnesota through the early detection of children's health, development and other factors that may interfere with a child's learning, growth and development. (2) Early Childhood Screening is offered to all Minnesota children between the ages of 3 and kindergarten entrance. Districts are encouraged to target children between 3 and 4 years of age. A child need not participate in the district screening if the child's health records indicate to the district that the child has received a comparable screening from a public or private health care provider. Parents or guardians may exempt children due to conscientiously held beliefs about the Early Childhood Screening program.

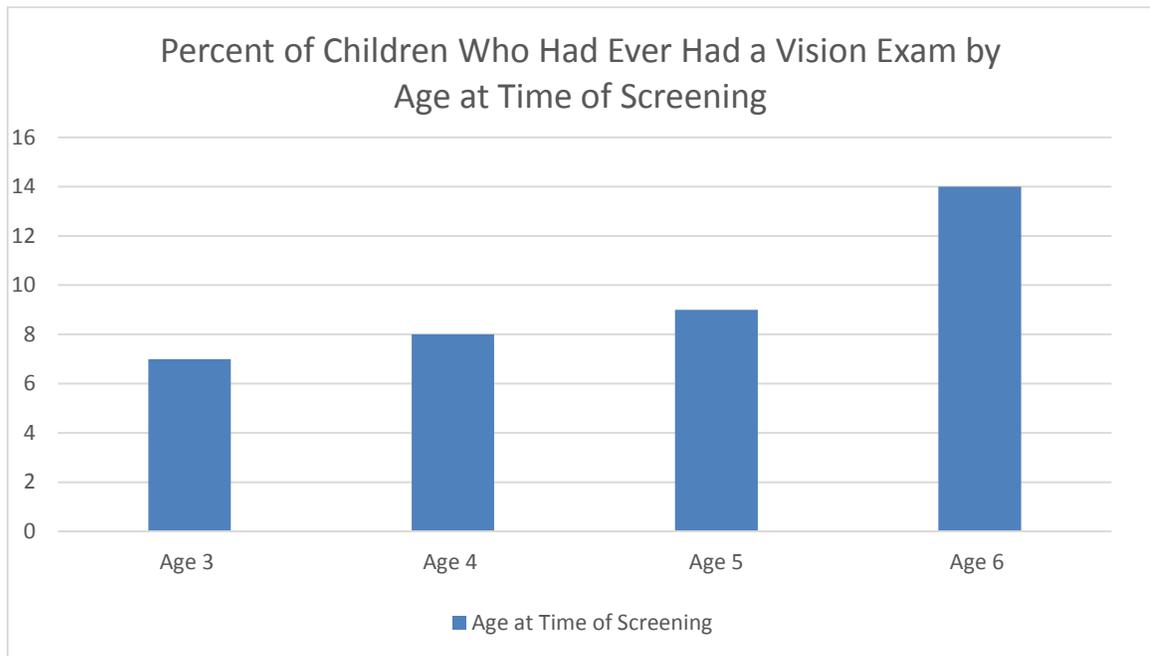
The Early Childhood Screening program follows the 2011 United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) Grade B recommendation for vision screening once between 3-5 years of age. (3) A Grade B recommendation means the USPSTF recommends the service. Early Childhood Screening also follows the Minnesota Vision Screening Guidelines: screening of risk factors including child and family history, medical conditions, or syndromes that have a high frequency of eye disorders; visual acuity; observation/external inspection including eye alignment and corneal reflex; unilateral cover check near and distance observing for eye muscle balance; and plus lens for age 5. Referrals are made to an optometrist or ophthalmologist if concerns are found during the screening. (4)

Major findings of this report from the districts' self-reporting through the Early Learning Services Online Data Submission System July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 include: Approximately 7 percent or 4,792 children screened had ever had a comprehensive vision exam as reported by their parents or guardians at the time of their Early Childhood Screening. (5)

## Analysis

The chart below reflects the proportion of children whose parents reported their child had ever had a comprehensive vision exam by age at the time of screening statewide. The data shows a greater percentage of children who had ever had a vision exam as the age of screening increases.

- 1816 or 7 percent of 3 year olds screened had ever had a vision exam
- 1974 or 8 percent of 4 year olds screened had ever had a vision exam
- 959 or 9 percent of 5 year olds screened had ever had a vision exam
- 43 or 14 percent of 6 year olds screened had ever had a vision exam



Approximately 7 percent or 4,792 of 64,889 children screened had ever had a comprehensive vision exam, as reported by their parents or guardians at the time of their early childhood screening.

- Approximately 80 percent or 259 of 325 districts report at least one child having had a comprehensive vision exam at the time of their early childhood screening.
- Approximately 20 percent or 66 of 325 districts report none of their children screened had had a comprehensive vision exam at the time of their early childhood screening.

The attached document, Addendum 1, shows the number and proportion of children whose parents or guardian reported their child had ever had a vision exam at the time of early childhood screening by age and by proportion for each reporting district. The Early Learning Services Data Submission collects data as follows:

- Vision exam by age represents those screened prior to kindergarten.
- Total vision exams includes children screened prior to kindergarten and after the start of kindergarten.
- Total children screened includes children screened prior to kindergarten and after the start of kindergarten.
- Percent vision exams of total screened includes all children screened prior to kindergarten and after the start of kindergarten.

Although this report reflects the majority of children screened across the state this year, there are reasons this data has limitations:

- Some districts and parents reported confusion about the definitions of vision screening and vision exam.
- Some districts who reported 100 percent or more of their screened children had a vision exam, later clarified it was a lower amount, as their data was entered incorrectly.
- There is a possibility that some of the children were screened more than one time, or some had a partial screening, such as a rescreen of vision, thus leading to totals by age over 100 percent. Since those screened after the start of kindergarten were not reported by age, it is possible that the totals would also be over 100% for the vision exam.

Information regarding the vision exam legislative change was provided through statewide and regional trainings, webinars and memos. Technical assistance was given to districts while cleaning the data through phone calls and emails to clarify the statute and improve data accuracy in the future. Any corrected data from districts, was incorporated into Addendum 1. The 2015 vision exam legislation requires data system changes at the local and state level (including translations of the vision exam question), to implement and report the data. Some districts are in the process of making these system changes and have not fully implemented them. Over the next few years, as system changes are made in districts and programs fully implement the statute and report the results, we may be able to see trends in the data as practices stabilize.

A continued need exists for technical assistance to districts for all components of Early Childhood Screening and for vision screening training in particular. Each year there are new staff in districts statewide. Therefore, an ongoing need for district training exists on the legislative mandate to ask parents about a vision exam and training on the correct reporting of results.

## **Conclusion**

The Minnesota Early Childhood Screening program currently follows both National and State vision screening recommendations. Statewide approximately 7 percent of all children screened had parents or guardians who reported their child had ever had a comprehensive vision exam.

## **Bibliography**

- (1) Minnesota Statute 121A.17 subdivision 3: [www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/)
- (2) Minnesota Statute 121A.16: [www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/)
- (3) US Preventive Services Task Force. Vision screening for children 1 to 5 years of age: US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation statement. *Pediatrics* 2011; 127: 340 - 6.
- (4) Minnesota Vision Screening Guidelines for Children Post Newborn Through 20 Years of Age, Minnesota Department of Health: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/topic/visioncreening/content/document/pdf/visionguidelines.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/topic/visioncreening/content/document/pdf/visionguidelines.pdf)
- (5) Minnesota Early Learning Services Submission Reports: See attached Addendum 1. EDUC-FILESERVER2 G: ELS > Legislation 2017 > Back up data > Addendum 1 15.16ELSVisionDatafinal.