UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF NURSING

Community and Public Health Environmental Initiative
Vision Screening Protocol for Early Head Start,
Head Start, and Family Support Centers

1) Goal: To integrate health and wellness into high quality early childcare and education programs.

2) Objectives:
- Screen infants, toddlers, and preschoolers for vision problems.
- Identify the presence of impaired vision.
- Assess child for the ability to use both eyes together.
- Detect structural abnormalities.
- Suggest referrals or re-test when necessary; provide explanation/education to families.

3) Rationale:
- Children experience 18 vision milestones in their first year of life (ECLKC, 2020). From sensing light to recognizing faces, these milestones are an important part of young children's growth and development. Untreated vision problems can impair a child's learning and their interactions with the world and the people around them. According to Prevent Blindness, "vision problems affect one in 20 preschoolers and one in four school-age children (2020)." Early detection of vision and correction of vision problems increase children's ability to learn. Our program follows national guidelines established by Prevent Blindness. For more information on vision issues in children and other vision screening tools and procedures, visit preventblindness.org.

4) Logistics:
- Determine equipment for vision screening. University of Maryland School of Nursing uses a WelchAllyn Spot Vision Screener. It measures common vision problems, including:
    - Myopia (nearsightedness)
    - Hyperopia (farsightedness)
    - Astigmatism (blurred vision)
    - Anisometropia (unequal refractive power)
    - Strabismus (eye misalignment)
    - Anisocoria (unequal pupil size)
- Schedule screening for vision testing with center director.
- Review guidelines with BSN, RN-to-BSN and/or CNL students.
- Have students demonstrate competency in measurement techniques before performing screening tasks independently.
- Organize screening by class (infants, toddlers, preschoolers). Center director or staff will notify parents about screening and obtain consent.

- Obtain a list of students and their DOB for each class (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers) that will be screened (see spreadsheet provided for screening).
- Conduct screening as a pair, working with one infant/child at a time, recording information on the spreadsheet as you go along.
- When all children have been screened, provide the results recorded on the spreadsheet to the center director. In addition, share the results on a USB drive. The WelchAllyn Spot Vision Screener stores the data from screening and can be downloaded. The results of the exams may be printed and placed in each child's chart.
- Prepare an individual report for the parent(s) or guardian of each child.
- If a child fails the exam, refer to pediatrician or eye doctor.
- Meet with parent(s) to review the results; both student and parent must sign each form. The clinical instructor should also sign.
- Place a signed copy of the individual report in the child's health record.
- Keep a copy of the spreadsheet with recorded results for follow-up and your organization's records.

References:

Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2020, July 22). *Vision Screening Tools for Very Young Children*. ECLKC. https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/vision-screening-tools-very-young-children.

Effective and Efficient School Vision Screening, Kathy Lee, MD, PhD, Pediatric Ophthalmologist, NASN and AAPOS (American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus), PowerPoint presentation, no date.

Loh, A. R., & Chiang, M. F. (2018). Pediatric Vision Screening. *Pediatrics in Review*, *39*(5), 225–234. https://doi.org/10.1542/pir.2016-0191

National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health. (n.d.). Vision Screening Table. Chicago; Prevent Blindness.

National Association of School Nurses. (2017, December). *Vision and Eye Health*. Vision and Eye Health - National Association of School Nurses. https://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/practice-topics/vision-health.

Prevent Blindness. (2020, April 26). *Recognition Visual Acuity (Optotype-based) Screening*. Prevent Blindness. http://preventblindness.org/recognition-visual-acuity-optotype-based-screening/.

Prevent Blindness. (2020, May 9). *Your Baby's Developing Sight*. Prevent Blindness. https://preventblindness.org/your-babys-developing-sight/.