

SNOHOMISH COUNTY CHILD HEALTH NOTES

Promoting early identification and partnerships between families, primary health care providers & the community.

Distributed by: Snohomish Health District and the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program

Contributors: Washington State Department of Health and UW – Center on Human Development & Disability



VISION SCREENING FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

One in twenty children between 6 months and 5 years of age has a serious eye disorder. The first three years of life are critical in the development of good vision. Amblyopia and other ophthalmologic disorders can be detected early and visual impairment can be lessened or prevented. Eye and vision screening is recommended at birth, approximately 6 months of age, 3 years, and 5 years, as well as any time a concern arises (the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology).

Risk Factors for Vision Problems:

- Less than 1500 grams at birth
- History of maternal "TORCH" infection during pregnancy
- Family history of conditions causing or associated with eye problems (e.g. retinoblastoma, congenital cataract, glaucoma, strabismus, amblyopia)
- Neurological and developmental disorders or systemic disease
- Use of medications associated with eye or vision abnormalities

DID YOU KNOW SOME COMMUNITY PROGRAMS SCREEN FOR VISION PROBLEMS IN INFANTS AND TODDLERS?

Children participating in Early Head Start, Head Start, and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) are required to have documentation of vision screening. Personnel sometimes reports difficulty obtaining results of eye examinations on young children from primary care offices. Many of these programs are exploring on-site vision screening using a targeted history and observation. Some early educators and public health nurses are using a new technology called "photo-screening" (a Polaroid-based technique to examine the eyes based on the red reflex) to comply with program requirements. You may see referrals to your office due to a concern identified from a community-based screening.

WHAT MIGHT YOU DO IN YOUR PRACTICE?

- **Be familiar with the risk factors** for vision problems (see box)
- **Educate parents about signs of eye problems** that require further evaluation:
 - Misaligned eyes or poor visual fixation
 - Light sensitivity
 - Ocular discharge
 - Persistent redness
 - Persistent tearing
 - Nystagmus
- **Include a vision history and examination** at well-child visits beginning at infancy:
 - Fixation and following
 - Red reflex
 - Nystagmus
 - Asymmetries
 - Ocular misalignment (strabismus)
 - Visual acuity abnormalities
 - Structural defects (urgent referral required for opacities of the ocular media)

- **Strabismus** can be evaluated by the corneal light reflex symmetry, the cover-uncover test, or the Bruekner test (corneal light reflex examination through an ophthalmoscope from 4-6 feet away in a darkened room).
- **Visual acuity** in infants and young children is most accurately determined by "preferential looking tests" (Teller Acuity Card test). See Reference # 1 for information on screening in children 3 years and older.
- **Photo-screening** is an emerging technology, but further refinement and adequate validation studies are needed before it becomes accepted for universal visual screening of infants. (See Reference # 1)

References:

1. *Preschool Vision Screening: Summary of a Task Force Report*. Hartmann EE et al. Pediatrics. 2000 Nov; 106(5):1105-1116.
2. American Academy of Ophthalmology, September 1997. Preferred practice patterns (available at the National Guideline Clearinghouse on line).
3. *The Eye in Childhood*. Mills MD. American Family Physician. 1999; 60:907-18.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

- **For children under age three:** Contact: Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program 425-339-1965
Children with Special Health Care Needs 425-339-8652
- **For children age three and older:** Contact: Local school district (see below)

District:	Phone:	District:	Phone:	District:	Phone:
Arlington	360-618-6215	Darrington	360-463-1323	Edmonds	425-670-7208
Everett	425-385-5254	Granite Falls	360-283-4513	Index	360-793-1330
Lake Stevens	425-355-1500	Lakewood	360-652-4501	Marysville	360-653-0825
Monroe	360-677-2623	Mukilteo	425-356-1250	Northshore	425-489-6377
Skykomish	360-677-2623	Snohomish	360-563-7310	Stanwood	360-629-1250
Sultan	360-793-9801				

SPECIAL NEEDS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

- **Local:** Parent to Parent – Jamie Coonts 425-258-2459, ext 4
Fathers Network Snohomish County – Keith Harrel 425-379-9810
- **Regional:** Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center
Health Professional Hotline 1-800-293-2462
Parent Resource Line 1-866-987-2500

Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip

Parent to Parent Support Programs of Washington 1-800-821-5927
www.arcwa.org/parent_to_parent.htm

Washington State Fathers Network 425-747-4004 ext. 4286
www.fathersnetwork.org

Washington State Medical Home Website www.medicalhome.org

WithinReach (formerly Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies) 1-800-322-2588, 1-800-833-6388 TTD
(for a listing of your county's Lead FRC's) www.withinreachwa.org
- **National/
Internet:** American Academy of Pediatrics www.aap.org
AAP Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics www.dbpeds.org
American Academy of Family Physicians www.aafp.org
Family Village (Extensive family resources for CSHCN) www.familyvillage.wisc.edu
Family Voices (Links to national and state family support networks) www.familyvoices.org



**SNOHOMISH
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Children with Special Health Care Needs
3020 Rucker, Suite 203
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