

# StEPS

Statewide Eyesight  
Preschooler Screening

Child and Family Health Service  
contact details



What you need to know  
about the StEPS program

## What is StEPS?

The StEPS program is an initiative of NSW Health and offers all 4 year old children free vision screening.

## Why would my child need their vision screened?

- Children rarely complain of eye problems
- Children may not realise they can't see well
- Some children can see well with one eye but have very poor vision in the other eye
- Children's eyes may look OK and parents/carers might think that their child can see well but some children might still have a vision problem
- The only way to tell if a child has a vision problem is to have the child's vision tested one eye at a time.



## Did you know?

- If a child has a 'lazy eye' it may lead to severe vision loss or blindness in that eye if not treated
- If a child has a vision problem, the earlier the problem is detected and treated the better the vision outcome
- If parents wear glasses or had vision problems as a child their children are more likely to have vision problems too
- After eight years of age some childhood vision problems cannot be treated and the child will have poor vision for the rest of their life - glasses won't help
- Low birth weight babies and children with neurological problems are at a greater risk of developing eye problems

## Does my child need their vision screened?

NSW Health advises all children to have their vision screened before they start school and strongly recommends that all 4 year old children participate in the vision screening program.

## How can my child access the StEPS program?

Your Local Health District will target preschools and child care centres to offer all four year old children a **free** vision screening. To have your child's vision screened you will need to complete a consent form and return it to your child's preschool/childcare centre. You can also have your four year old child's vision screened for **free** through your local Child & Family Health Service. Contact details for your local Child & Family Health Service are on the back of this pamphlet.



## How will I know if my child has a vision problem?

Every parent/carer of children who have a vision screening will be informed of the results of their child's vision screening assessment. Should a vision problem be detected you will be contacted by your Local Health District and asked to have your child's eyes fully tested by an eye health professional.

As children's eyes continue to develop until approximately 8 years of age it is important to ensure every child's vision develops normally throughout these formative years.

The StEPS program is a vision screening program and does not offer a full diagnostic assessment. If you have any concerns about your child's vision you are recommended to have your child's vision tested fully by an eye health professional.