

## Recommendations For Vision Screeners

Vision screenings are often performed by school nurses, pediatricians, family doctors and other health care providers. There are inherent limitations to vision screenings since screeners do not have the time or resources necessary to detect many “hard to find” vision problems such as farsightedness (ability to see up close), focusing and eye coordination.

For this reason, it is important for vision screeners to carefully make parents and teachers aware of the limitations of their screenings, and to not rule out a learning-related vision problem even if a child has passed a screening. In an effort to help, the Optometric Physicians of Washington is in the process of putting together a program to help school nurses maximize their screenings. Below is a sampling of recommendations:

1. **Add:** Plus Lens Test
  - **To evaluate:** farsightedness
  
2. **Add:** Steropsis Test
  - **To evaluate:** Amblyopia, eye turns and eye coordination
  
3. **Add:** Observational Checklist for parents/teachers
  - **To evaluate:** Signs of undetected vision problems shown by students who are not performing as expected

These tests cost approximately \$170 and add about 40 seconds to each screening. To order these tests contact Bernell at [www.bernell.com](http://www.bernell.com) or call 800-348-2225.

The tests are simple to administer. Please read on for step-by-step instructions.

## Plus Lens Testing

Purpose: A screening procedure to help detect farsightedness (ability to see close-up).

Equipment Needed:

- Visual acuity chart, positioned in well lighted area
- Occluder or 3x5 card
- +1.50 lenses (order from Bernell at [www.bernell.com](http://www.bernell.com) – \$15)

Procedure:

1. First perform regular visual acuity test
  - Student stands at appropriate distance from chart based on calibration.
2. Student covers the left eye with the occluder or card. Be sure he/she is not peeking or pressing on eye.
3. Instructions: “Call out the smallest row of letters you can. Don’t squint or peek around the cover.”
  - It is helpful to memorize the lines of letters so that you can watch the student during testing rather than the chart.
4. Record the smallest row for which the student correctly identifies at least half of the letters.
5. Repeat for the other eye.
6. Repeat with both eyes together.
7. Now perform the Plus Lens Test: Have student hold +1.50 lenses in front of both eyes (see photo).
8. Instructions: “Call out the smallest row of letters you can. Remember not to squint.”

Expected Findings: A student who is not farsighted will have blurry vision when looking through the +1.50 lenses. A visual acuity of 20/40 or worse through the +1.50 lenses is expected for a child that is not farsighted.

Pass/Fail Criteria:

- PASS -- 20/40 or worse with the +1.50 lenses
- FAIL – 20/30 or better with the +1.50 lenses

## **Stereopsis Testing**

Purpose: A screening procedure to help detect if the two eyes are working together appropriately.

Equipment Needed:

- Random dot stereopsis test; eg. Randot shapes, Random dot E, Lang Stereo test (order from Bernell at [www.bernell.com](http://www.bernell.com) – \$150)
- Polaroid glasses if needed

Procedure:

1. Student wears polaroid glasses over his normal glasses.
2. Stereo picture is presented at 16 inches from student's eyes in a reading position.
  - The picture should be even illuminated. (Photo)
3. Instructions: "What pictures do you see in here?"
  - Note: For the Random dot E test the student is presented two small cards and he/she has to identify which of the two cards has an "E" in it. The position of the two cards can be switched around for repeated presentations.

Expected Findings: Students who are using their two eyes together efficiently should be able to identify the pictures on the test correctly.

Pass/Fail Criteria

- PASS – correctly identifies pictures
- FAIL – does not correctly identify pictures (usually he/she will see no pictures as opposed to wrong pictures)
- For the Random dot E test – Correct responses to 3 of 4 presentations is considered passing

**For more information, contact:**

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