

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: JPA-RA
Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Related Source: *Code of Maryland Regulations* §10.11.04.05; *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article, §7-404

Screening Programs: Lead, Hearing, and Vision

I. PURPOSE

To comply with state and federal requirements to screen and identify students at risk for lead poisoning.

To comply with state requirements to screen and identify students with auditory or visual problems, to refer and follow-up on children who failed auditory and/or visual screening, and to interpret screening results to appropriate individuals.

II. BACKGROUND

Screening procedures are part of the overall health appraisal of children. They select or screen out through teacher observations, health histories, screening tests, and medical and psychological tests and examinations those children most likely to be in need of further medical appraisal or investigation.

Lead poisoning from exposure to lead contaminants is a widespread environmental hazard. Children are at greatest risk from birth to age six while their neurological systems are developing. Sustained exposure to lead can cause long-lasting neurological damage and death. Effects of exposure to lead in the environment include learning disabilities, shortened attention span, irritability, and lowered IQ.

Hearing and vision problems are health concerns and can be barriers to learning. Screening allows for early detection of any problems.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. *Lead poisoning screening* is a strategy used by health care providers to identify lead poisoning risk by asking a series of questions from a lead risk questionnaire and/or drawing a blood sample to measure the amount of lead in the blood.

- B. *Targeted zip code* is an area designated by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Targeting Plan for Areas at Risk for Childhood Lead Poisoning.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Lead

1. For students entering Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Head Start or general prekindergarten, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Blood Lead Testing Certificate Form 4620 must be completed certifying that the student has undergone blood testing for lead poisoning, consistent with federal requirements. If a general prekindergarten and Head Start student does not have the Maryland DHMH Blood Lead Testing Certificate Form 4620 on file after the beginning of the school year, Head Start nurses will conduct the blood test and complete the form when the blood test results are received.
2. For students entering MCPS special education pre-school programs, kindergarten or first grade, the Maryland DHMH Blood Lead Testing Certificate (DHMH Form 4620) must be completed, consistent with state requirements.
 - a) If the child never lived in a targeted zip code, the parent/guardian completes the section of DHMH Form 4620 certifying the child never lived in a targeted zip code.
 - b) If the child lives or has ever lived in a targeted zip code in Maryland, his or her health care provider must complete DHMH Form 4620, certifying that the student has been screened and/or has undergone blood testing for lead poisoning.
 - c) In October of every school year, School Health Services (SHS) provides a follow-up letter to noncompliant parents/guardians of students in special education prekindergarten, kindergarten, and Grade 1.
 - d) Every school year at the end of January, SHS compiles a list of noncompliant students in special education preschool, kindergarten, and Grade 1 from all elementary schools and forwards the list of names and addresses to the Montgomery County Lead Program for further follow-up.

B. Hearing and Vision

1. The school community health nurse (SCHN) and principal are responsible for planning for the hearing and vision screening of (1) all students in Head Start, kindergarten, Grade 8, and special education students of comparable age to those grades; (2) Grade 1 students who were not screened in kindergarten or were identified in kindergarten as having a one-line difference in acuity or were referred and received no follow-up; (3) new entrants to MCPS unless evidence is presented that the student was tested within the past year; and (4) students referred with symptoms of hearing or vision problems.
2. Testing will be performed in the schools. The screenings are completed by members of the School Health Hearing and Vision Screening Team.
3. The SCHN sends home referral letters to parents/guardians of students who have failed the screening. The SCHN answers questions about the referral or links families with community resources as needed.
4. The parent/guardian is requested to seek medical care to determine the cause of and treatment for the failure and return the completed referral to the school health room. The SCHN will make every possible effort to encourage full diagnostic follow-up and to obtain follow-up information for those students who have failed screening tests.
5. The SCHN shares significant findings with school staff as needed.
6. School staff should refer to the SCHN's Student Health Manual (SHM) for more specific screening procedures.

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 525-8, revised October 1982, revised October 2, 2008, revised August 13, 2009.