

# MEMO

City of Hamilton

Healthy and Safe Communities, Public Health Services

**To: Elementary School Principals, Vice Principals, Kindergarten Year 2 Teachers, Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, and School Staff**

**RE: Implementation of the Child Visual Health and Vision Screening Protocol, 2018**

## Background:

- Every year in Ontario, 15,000 children have trouble learning to read because they need glasses;
- In Hamilton, only 48% of children have had an eye exam between the ages of 2 and 5;
- The City of Hamilton Public Health Services will ensure the provision of in school vision screening services to ALL Kindergarten Year 2 students as per the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Child Visual Health and Vision Screening Protocol, 2018.

## Key messages:

- The City of Hamilton has contracted with McMaster Paediatric Eye Research Group (Eye Mac) to perform in school vision screening;
- The vision screening identifies some risk factors for the following: i) Amblyopia; ii) Reduced stereopsis and/or strabismus; and iii) Refractive vision disorder
- The vision screening tools are as follows: a) HOTV visual acuity chart with crowding bars; b) Randot Preschool Stereotest; and c) Autorefractor
- Vision screening is NOT a replacement for a comprehensive eye exam and is NOT billable to OHIP. There is no cost to families or the school boards for vision screening;
- Comprehensive eye exams are performed by Optometrists, and are free with an Ontario health card for all children up to and including 19 years of age;
- Kindergarten – Year 1 students can obtain free glasses through the Eye See...Eye Learn<sup>®</sup> program;
- There are other programs available to help with the cost of glasses. Visit [www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca) to learn about these programs.



## Vision Screening logistics:

- Your school will be contacted to schedule vision screening;
- Screening will require dedicated space – a half gymnasium set up is ideal (12m x 13m);
- All Hamilton schools will be scheduled by December 2019;
- Pre-screen notification letters and visual health promotion packages will be dropped off to the school in advance of the screening day – to be sent home with all Kindergarten Year 2 students at least 10 days prior to vision screening;
- Vision screening requires passive consent from parents. Parents can opt out of vision screening – directions to do so included in the package;
- Eye Mac staff will be available to speak with each class to introduce themselves, explain the vision screening process, and answer any questions students may have;
- Scripting\key messages will also be provided to teachers in advance of the screening day;
- Results of each student's vision screening will be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the parent\guardian of the student; and marked confidential;
- Teachers will send the letters home to parents in the student's "important bag" (or equivalent);
- Schools will be provided a reminder letter for parents following the vision screening. This will also go home with Kindergarten Year 2 students in their important bag.



Please call 905-546-2424 x5369 if you have any questions about the vision screening or visual health resources.



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