



NHSA Vision Screening Survey and Parent Focus Group Results - What's Working and What Needs Work

An educational presentation from the *Year of Children's Vision* initiative



About the *Year of Children's Vision* initiative

- The goal of YOCV is to provide national guidance to staff of Head Start, Early Head Start and other early childhood programs to standardize approaches to vision screening, improve follow-up for eye care, provide family friendly educational information and consult with some of the nation's leading pediatric eye care providers to ensure best practices.
- YOCV was initiated by and is supported by leading national vision health organizations, for a complete list and other resources go to: <http://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/year-childrens-vision>



About today's presentation...

- The goal of today's presentation is to examine the outcomes of a national survey on vision health programs in Head Start and Early Head Start programs as well as a Head Start parent and staff focus group to determine opportunities for improvements in how HS/EHS programs approach children's vision.
- After today you will be able to:
 - Describe 3 trends in Head Start vision programs
 - Describe 3 ways parents want to be engaged in their children's vision health
 - Describe 3 methods to incorporate in parent peer-to-peer programs for improved vision health outcomes



Your presenters

- **Jean Ramsey, MD, MPH;** Vice Chair of Education and Program Director, Department of Ophthalmology; Associate Professor for Ophthalmology and Pediatrics; Boston Medical Center/Boston University School of Medicine
- **Kira Baldonado, BA;** Director, National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness



Empowering parents for children's vision: outcomes from the 2013 Head Start parent and staff focus group discussion

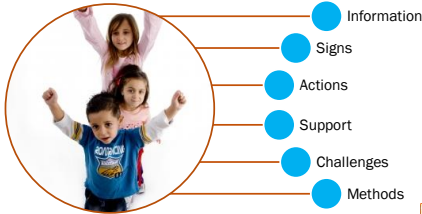
NHSA Parent Focus Group Participants

December 2013; Atlanta, GA



The Parent Perspective

What parents need to support their child's vision:



What information should every parent know about their children's vision and eye health?

- » Focus on the effects of vision problems on a child's development
- » When to start checking
- » Where vision is checked
- » What is a vision screening? An eye exam?
- » Where to get support from other parents
- » How to educate the community
- » How to educate the child



Are there signs parents can look for to find a possible vision problem?

- » Squinting
- » Rubbing
- » Getting close on things [to see them]
- » Reading disorder [literacy problem may really be a vision problem]
- » Behavioral issues – acting out, crying
- » Listening to children – they will tell you what's going on
- » Headaches
- » Lack of eye control/lazy eye
- » Redness
- » Watery eyes
- » Sinking, bulging eyes
- » When children refuse to do something [disobedience may be because of a vision problem]
- » Can't find their toys, tell the difference between colors



Most often, children are able to work around vision issues, making them difficult to be easily seen by others.



What actions should parents take if they think their children have a vision problem?

- » Talk with an eye care provider/pediatrician
- » Get informed
- » Take child for an eye exam with an eye specialist
- » Take child for an exam at an early age (3 or 4) – to determine early on if there is an issue
- » Let Head Start staff know about the issue [help monitor]
- » Advocate for early detection – just like for dental care
- » Share information with other parents – keep the conversation going parent-to-parent
- » Involve teachers – they should be trained and educated [about vision and eye health]
- » Talking with parents [is preferable because it is] more personable, more comfortable, someone else who has "been there"



What kind of support do you think parents might need if their child has a vision problem?



- » Parent-to-parent
- » Head Start staff
- » Financial
- » Transportation
- » Referrals
- » Personal advocate
- » Help talking to children – about wearing glasses, dealing with teasing, emotional support for them
- » Teachers can educate [help all children understand issue, help children with vision problems deal with stigma]
- » Translations – [three considerations]
 - understanding medical terminology
 - communicating in home [native] language other than English
 - information for different reading [literacy] levels
- » Listen to the child – "Mom I still can't see."



What might be some of the challenges parents face in learning about children's vision and eye health?

- » Trust – depending on culture
- » Financial stability
- » Acceptance
- » Follow up/follow through on appointments
- » Could be a larger issue – not just a need for glasses, but surgery etc.
- » Insurance issues – how to get referrals for eye care – [many insurance companies] won't pay without one
- » Parents knowing their rights and responsibilities
- » What happens when kids lose glasses – insurance options, what gets covered?
- » What happens after kids get glasses



What's the best way to get information to parents about children's vision and eye health?

- ☞ Town hall meetings
- ☞ Peer programs
- ☞ Include information in Head Start orientation
- ☞ Literature – newsletters, brochures
- ☞ Health fairs
- ☞ Policy council meetings
- ☞ Trained Head Start family support staff
- ☞ Face-to-face
- ☞ Electronic [communication – website] can be helpful but not all have access
- ☞ PSAs – radio and TV
- ☞ Videos – for meetings
- ☞ Phone calls – reach parents by phone with important information
- ☞ Utilize programs from medical/vision schools in the area



Best Advice for Parent Engagement



Start early



Keep it personal



Keep it local



Keep it factual, simple, and accessible

2 Examples of Effective Parent Partnership

Head Start/Early Head Start

Peer Health Educator

Learn to be Healthy, be Healthy to Learn



COFI- Community Organizing and Family Issues (cofionline.org)

http://www.cofionline.org/images/PowerPAC_ELL_report/HSA_brief_WEB.pdf



In summary...

- ☞ Vision is an issue that parents WANT information and education about. Start early and act often.
- ☞ Vision problems in children is a highly personal issue for parents that requires an equally personal approach for assistance.
- ☞ Work through the "stop signs"- personal/cultural beliefs, trust issues, access to care.



Questions for the presenters?



Conclusion of today's presentation

- ☞ Thank you to each of our presenters
- ☞ Be on the lookout for more Year of Children's Vision resources
 - YOCV website: <http://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/year-childrens-vision>

Thank you for attending!

