

Introduction to “Small Steps for Big Vision: An Eye Health Information Tool Kit for Parents and Caregivers”



The National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness partnered with the National Head Start Association to create an online resource – *Small Steps for Big Vision: An Eye Health Information Tool Kit for Parents and Caregivers*.

The purpose of this online tool kit is to provide parents and caregivers with the information, suggested actions, and assistance they need to be empowered partners in their children’s vision and eye health, and to care for their own vision and eye health.

Parents and caregivers have indicated they would like to better understand the role that vision plays in their child’s development and ability to learn. This knowledge helps parents and caregivers know how to respond when their child receives a referral for an eye examination after a vision screening, and the importance of taking their child to an eye doctor.

The information in this tool kit is designed to help reduce the gap between vision screening referrals for eye examinations and follow-up to eye care.

It is our hope that Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, early care and education programs, and parent education and advocacy organizations will use this tool kit to impact the vision of children and their families across the United States for years to come.

Why did we develop this online tool kit?

We developed the *Small Steps for Big Vision: An Eye Health Information Tool Kit for Parents and Caregivers* with 5 goals to:

1. help parents/caregivers understand the importance of good vision for their children’s learning and development,
2. encourage parents/caregivers to arrange and attend an eye examination when their children do not pass vision screening,
3. encourage parents/caregivers to follow their eye doctor’s advice and suggestions for their child (e.g., buy prescribed glasses and attend follow-up eye doctor visits),
4. encourage parents/caregivers to care for their own vision and eye health by arranging and attending an eye examination for themselves, and
5. encourage parents/caregivers to follow their eye doctor’s advice and suggestions for themselves (e.g., wearing prescription glasses and sunglasses).



What is in the online tool kit?

The “*Small Steps for Big Vision: An Eye Health Information Tool Kit for Parents and Caregivers*” includes:

Materials for a Parent/Caregiver Vision Social/Meeting

- Materials include a PowerPoint presentation, a training manual for holding a parent/caregiver vision social/meeting, suggestions for experiential activities during the presentation, and handouts pertaining to take-home messages from the social/meeting and assisting with receiving eye care and treatment.

Parent/Caregiver Resources

- Resources include information about the importance of good vision for learning; signs, symptoms, and risk factors of eye and vision problems; common early childhood vision disorders; the importance of receiving vision screening with evidence-based tools; the importance of a follow-up eye examination after receiving a referral from a vision screening; and short videos showing vision disorders, answering vision and eye health questions from parents, discussing the importance of attending an eye examination after a vision screening referral, and describing what to expect at a pediatric eye examination.

Social Media Messages

- Social media messages include information, such as newsletter text, about vision and eye health and attending the Parent/Caregiver Vision Social/Meeting.

Check the *Small Steps for Big Vision* webpage for additional components that will be added over time, (<https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/small-steps-big-vision>).

We thank the following Head Start programs for pilot testing the Parent/Caregiver Vision Social/Meeting materials:

- Monongalia County Head Start (WV)
- Guilford Child Development (NC)
- Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet (IL)
- ISWA Head Start (SC)
- East Coast Migrant Head Start: La Familia Center (FL) and Colleton Center (SC)



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We thank the following individuals who reviewed contents of the *Small Steps for Big Vision: An Eye Health Information Tool Kit for Parents and Caregivers*:

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Resources will include:

- Information about evidence-based and best-practice vision screening tools and procedures.
- A list of risk factors and red flags for vision and eye health problems.
- Strategies for a referral and follow-up process to help reduce the gap between vision screening referrals and eye examinations and treatment plans.
- Strategies for addressing common barriers between the vision screening referral and the eye examination and treatment plan.
- Strategies for addressing cultural beliefs around vision and eye care.
- Suggestions for advocating for the *“Small Steps for Big Vision: An Eye Health Information Tool Kit for Parents and Caregivers”* in local communities and states.



“Small Steps for Big Vision” is an initiative of the National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness (www.nationalcenter.preventblindness.org). For more information, contact: info@preventblindness.org

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