

## VISION REQUIREMENTS

The ability to see greatly impacts a student's ability to learn. Screening for vision problems is an appropriate and important part of school health services, largely carried out by the school nurse. The objective of a vision screening program is to identify children with possible visual defects at the earliest possible stage. This allows ample time to refer children for diagnosis and treatment.

Vision screening is mandated by Missouri state law (RSMo 167.195), enacted in 2007, for children in first and third grades. In addition, Missouri state law (RSMo 167.194) calls for children enrolling for the first time in kindergarten or first grade in a public elementary school to receive a comprehensive vision examination. All first and third grade students will be tested this school year.

### What the Law Says

- Beginning July 1, 2008, every child enrolling for the first time in kindergarten or first grade in a public elementary school in this state shall receive one comprehensive vision examination performed by a state-licensed optometrist or physician.
- The law allows a parent or legal guardian to have a child excused from the comprehensive vision examination requirement and/or the vision screening upon submission of a written request to the school administrator.
- The law also created a state-level Children's Vision Commission, with members appointed by the governor, to establish specific vision-screening criteria.
- Beginning July 1, 2008, and continuing through the 2010-11 school year unless extended by act of the General Assembly, all public school districts shall conduct an eye screening for each student once before the completion of first grade and again before the completion of third grade.
- The eye screening method utilized shall be one approved by the Children's Vision Commission and shall be performed by an appropriately trained school nurse or other trained and qualified employee of the school district.