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WORKING TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH

University of Wyoming | [uwo.edu/wind](http://uwo.edu/wind)

**GO FOR GOLD**

## WHO ARE WE?

The Wyoming Vision Collaborative works to improve children's eye health. We are an initiative of the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) at the University of Wyoming.

The Wyoming Vision Collaborative unites over 30 key Wyoming stakeholders and professionals in an ongoing process to establish a coordinated system of education, training, referral, and family support around childhood vision. Our stakeholder group includes representatives from: the Wyoming Optometric Association, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Family Services, Lions of Wyoming Foundation, and various non-profit organizations invested in eye health.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

Our goal is to build an effective statewide system for vision screening using the most up-to-date research and evidence-based practices. The Wyoming Vision Collaborative focuses on coordination, training, education, referral, surveillance and family support.

To build a coordinated system, we are using the nine essential elements for a statewide vision system:

- uniform planning
- surveillance
- coordination and collaboration
- screening infrastructure
- training for professionals
- technical advisory processes
- laws and regulations
- public and professional education and awareness
- sustained funding

## WHY IS VISION SCREENING IMPORTANT?

A majority of learning, beginning at birth, is visual. Vision problems left untreated can cause permanent vision loss, learning difficulties, and delayed sensory, motor, cognitive or social-emotional development.

According to Prevent Blindness America, one in 20 preschoolers experience a vision problem. For children in Head Start programs, the number grows to one in five children. Finding vision problems early for children is important for the detection of amblyopia, a preventable vision problem that can cause permanent vision loss if not treated by the age of seven.

## WHEN IS THERE AN UPCOMING VISION SCREENING IN MY COMMUNITY?

Check in with your local Child Development Center or Lions club for their vision screening schedule. Screenings are free for all children ages birth-5 years old. Please also see our website at [www.uwyo.edu/wind/vision](http://www.uwyo.edu/wind/vision) for additional vision resources.

## WHEN SHOULD CHILDREN RECEIVE AN EYE EXAM?

Proper eye care goes beyond waiting until a child starts school. Eye exams are recommended to be done **annually** from the time a child is born throughout his or her adult life. Exams are different than vision screenings; exams should be done by an eye doctor. Even if a child passes his or her vision screening, it is still recommended to have a yearly eye exam as screenings will only catch some eye problems.

However, vision screenings can be a good way for families to identify treatable eye problems and prevent vision loss in young children in case they are not regularly seeing an eye doctor. Amblyopia is one eye problem that can cause permanent vision loss if not treated and is found in 1-2% of children between the ages of 6 months to 6 years old.

## WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES DOES THE WYOMING VISION COLLABORATIVE HOST?

The Wyoming Vision Collaborative:

- Gathers stakeholders for conferences and the Wyoming Vision Summit
- Informs statewide strategic planning around eye health for all ages
- Produces and shares information for families and professionals about eye health
- Facilitates trainings for community screeners
- Helps provide screening follow-up
- Provides technical assistance to organizations regarding eye health and vision screening

