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SYNOPSIS
Requires young children entering public schools or Head Start Programs for first time to have comprehensive eye examination completed.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.
AN ACT concerning the vision of certain children and
supplementing chapter 40 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
of New Jersey:

1. a. The State Board of Education shall require a child age 6
and under who is entering a public preschool, public school, or a
Head Start Program for the first time to have a comprehensive eye
examination completed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist by
January 1 of the child’s initial year of enrollment in the school or
program.

b. The Department of Health shall maintain a list of resources
from which a parent or guardian may obtain a free or reduced price
comprehensive eye examination for a child. The list shall be posted
on the department’s Internet website and updated annually. The
department shall also provide the list annually to each public
preschool, public school, and Head Start Program, and the list shall
be made available by the public preschool, public school, and Head
Start Program to the parents or guardians of all enrolled children.

c. A principal, director, or other person in charge of a public
preschool, public school, or Head Start Program shall collect from
the child’s parent or guardian evidence of the child’s
comprehensive eye examination, as provided by regulation of the
State board.

In the case of a parent or guardian who has not provided
evidence of the child’s comprehensive eye exam, the principal,
director, or other person in charge of a public preschool, public
school, or Head Start Program shall notify the parents or guardians
every three months following the child’s initial enrollment of the
requirement regarding the comprehensive eye examination.

d. A comprehensive eye examination that was performed 1no
more than one year1 prior to a child’s initial enrollment in a public
preschool, public school, or Head Start Program shall be deemed to
satisfy the requirement of this section.

e. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations
pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
(C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to implement the provisions of this section.
f. There is hereby created a special fund in the Department of
Education, which shall be entitled the "Comprehensive Eye
Examination Fund." The fund shall be maintained in a separate
account and administered by the commissioner to carry out the
provisions of this section. The fund shall consist of (1) any monies
appropriated by the State for the purposes of the fund; (2) any
monies donated for the purposes of the fund; and (3) all interest and
investment earnings received on monies in the fund. The fund shall
be used to cover the costs of comprehensive eye examinations
conducted pursuant to this section, for any uninsured children and
children without applicable healthcare coverage.

  g. As used in this section, "comprehensive eye examination"
means an evaluation that includes a child's history, external and
ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment and
motility, refraction, and assessment of accommodation and
binocular vision, performed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

  2. This act shall take effect in the first full school year
following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill directs the State Board of Education to require each
child age 6 and under who is entering a public preschool, public
school, or a Head Start Program for the first time to have a
comprehensive eye examination completed by an optometrist or
ophthalmologist by January 1 of the child’s initial year of
enrollment in the school or program. The Department of Health
will maintain a list of resources from which a parent or guardian
may obtain a free or reduced price comprehensive eye examination.
The list will be posted on the Department of Health’s website and
will be provided to each public preschool, public school, and Head
Start Program.

A principal, director, or other person in charge of a public
preschool, public school, or Head Start Program must collect from
the child’s parent or guardian evidence of the child’s
comprehensive eye examination, as provided by regulation of the
State board. A comprehensive eye examination that was performed
no more than one year prior to a child’s initial enrollment in a
public preschool, public school, or Head Start Program will satisfy
the requirements under the bill.