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BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REGARDING NEW VISION EVALUATION REQUIREMENT

New State Law Now Requires Vision Evaluations

A new state law which took effect in 2006 requires students entering school for the first time, including kindergarteners and transfer students from out of state, to provide proof of a vision evaluation within six months prior to the student's entrance.

The vision evaluation is required to test for amblyopia (lazy eye) and strabismus (misalignment of the eyes), which are two of the most common vision disorders in young children, as well as internal and external eye health and visual acuity. A certificate or form stating results of the evaluation must be signed by an optometrist, physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse.

According to the Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision, statistics show that 80% or more of all learning during a child's first 12 years depends on vision, yet one of every five children entering kindergarten has an undetected vision disorder significant enough to impact the child's ability to learn. Symptoms of vision problems often are not evident to parents or educators at early ages, the Foundation notes, and young children often cannot self-identify abnormal conditions.

Typical vision screenings test only for distance vision and are not designed to assess many of the common vision disorders in young children. The new state law now helps assure that more students get a broader assessment of conditions that could adversely impact their learning ability.

For additional information, visit the Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision website at www.nechildrensvision.org

Source: Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision (www.NEchildrensvision.org)