

School Vision Clinic Guidelines & Expectations

Introduction

The Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision's (NFCV) mission is to work "to ensure that every child entering school in Nebraska is visually ready to learn through providing educational materials and resources for children, parents, educators, health care providers, and other concerning the crucial relationship between vision and learning." We believe that children should have comprehensive eye examinations, particularly when there are concerns about visual acuity (clarity of letters), binocular vision (how well the two eyes work together), visual-information & perceptual processing (how the brain processes visual information), and/or eye health, as more generic screenings are unable to uncover some of these problems. When vision problems go undetected or uncorrected, the child may fall behind because they have to put in extra effort to read and not have blurry or double vision. This is especially true of children who are far-sighted or have visual conditions like convergence insufficiency, accommodative insufficiency or accommodative infacility.

Goals of School Vision Clinics

- Provide a comprehensive eye examination, and eye ware as needed, for underserved students who otherwise have limited access to care
- Provide a comprehensive eye examination for students who have been identified by the school as having potential vision disorders or deficiencies
- Obtain data which assesses the degree to which students' academic performance improves by addressing vision needs

Targeted Student Participants

Because of the nature of this event, NFCV is unable to provide comprehensive eye examinations to every child in a particular grade or class in a single event. NFCV is looking to serve students who may not have been provided care due to lack of insurance, lack of financial resources for care, and/or those who may have limited access to care. Ideal ages would be kindergarten, first and second graders, and any student on an IEP/504 plan who can reasonably attend an exam and participate with the assistance of paraprofessionals.

NFCV would suggest prioritizing:

- Any children who were screened through other organizations such as pediatrician's office, volunteers, or school nurses who have reduced visual acuity in either eye (20/40 or worse) at distance or near, reduced stereoacuity (depth perception), or who have failed the Spot Screener or similar.

- Referrals from student's teachers or school nurses for any possible vision concerns.
- Students who are testing at or below standard levels on reading tests

Project Description & School Expectations

Schools or communities interested in conducting clinics need to fill out an application. The application process is outlined below.

School vision clinics can be conducted in two formats: A clinic held at a school or other community facility, or by transporting students to a local optometric office.

Preceding the clinic, schools would be expected to have conducted vision screenings to identify students warranting further evaluation. School nurses and teachers should be surveyed for their observations of student behaviors that might indicate potential vision disorders. In addition, academic testing results should be available in order to provide a baseline comparison.

Schools are responsible for promoting the clinic. NFCV can provide information that can be used for informing parents, faculty, local news media, or other community leaders. **Consent Forms must be obtained from parents/guardians/hosts for participating students before dates are confirmed for any NFCV School Vision Clinic.** It is estimated that approximately one-third of children referred to a program such as this will have consent paperwork returned to the host. NFCV will provide consent forms for the exam itself, but the host will be responsible for any additional required consent forms, such as a field trip release. Since prior experience indicates that only 1 of every 3 invited students will return required consent forms, schools are encouraged to allow as much lead time as possible for distributing and following up to obtain these consents.

Following the clinic, schools are expected to provide NFCV with results of follow up academic testing that will compare results for students seen in these clinics with their performance prior to the clinic and with the overall student population.

Clinic Formats & Host Responsibilities

A. School-based option

NFCV can provide protocols, checklists, and consultation for a school or community to conduct a one-day clinic at a school, central office, or other community facility. NFCV will solicit and coordinate availability of volunteer optometrists. It is reasonable that a school-based clinic could accommodate approximately 30 students in a half-day or 60 students in a full school day, if students can be seen throughout the lunch hour and volunteers take breaks in shifts. **Clinic dates will not be confirmed by NFCV until a sufficient number of doctors are secured.**

In this format, the host would be responsible for equipment rental, at a rate of \$200-300 per exam lane. For every 30 children seen, 3 lanes would be required. NFCV partners with Onsite EssilorLuxottica Vision Foundation for these rentals. NFCV would work with area optometrists, as well as other volunteer optometrists from around the state to staff the event. The host would need to have approximately 12 volunteers available throughout the clinic for every 30 children expected to help the

clinic run smoothly. Volunteers can be school personnel, parents, nursing students, or community volunteers. In this format, it is recommended that space be available to accommodate 12 different stations. Suggested volunteer roles, along with a recommended room diagram, are outlined in an Event Manual.

B. Office-based option

NFCV can help coordinate a clinic to be held at a local or area optometry practice(s). This option is contingent on being able to make appropriate arrangements with local optometrists.

With this option, students would be transported to the optometrists' offices for the exam. The school and community would be responsible for arranging and coordinating student transportation. It may be possible or necessary to schedule appointments on multiple days depending on the number of students and the school would coordinate scheduling of appointments with the participating optometrist(s). The host school would be responsible for obtaining parental consents for student transportation and for the cost of disposable supplies required to run the clinic.

With an office-based clinic, there is no need or cost for rented equipment and there may be fewer school and community volunteers needed.

RESPONSIBILITIES & COSTS FOR HOSTS

Hosts are responsible for the following costs:

- Exam lane rental costs-- \$200-300/lane (for school-based clinics) [rental fee includes the cost of disposable supplies required]
- Costs of disposable supplies required for clinic (for office-based clinics)
- Copying and distributing consent forms and materials to promote awareness of the clinic
- Costs related to transporting students

Additional Host expectations for *School-Based Clinics*

- *Provide (12) 8-ft tables for exam stations*
- *Provide (12) folding chairs for exam stations*
- *Provide seating for approx. 10-12 students in waiting areas*
- *Provide water/coffee/lunch for volunteers*
- Painter's tape (mark 10 foot lines, etc)
- Command picturing hanging strips (VA charts)
- Clear name badge holders (event staff ID)
- Sticker name tags (inset into badge holders, and for child ID)
- Printer paper
- Staples
- Pens
- Electrical outlets and extension cords

Benefits of NFCV Vision Clinics

The benefit of participating in this program is two-fold. Children who need help receive care and receive glasses, if needed. Most of those children will have been identified as having some vision deficiency, but exams also identify some students who may have passed a basic vision screening. NFCV hopes this can help set the student up for better success as they continue learning. In addition, the data generated by participating in these events will be used to further evaluate the connection between vision and learning. NFCV will use this information to better inform students, parents, educators and other health professionals about normal eye and vision development, how vision affects learning, etc.

Application Process

If you are interested in hosting an event in partnership with NFCV, please contact NFCV at NFCV@assocoffice.net and you will be sent an application to participate. The application will include questions and surveys to assess items such as:

- Approximate number of children to be evaluated
- Percentage of children in the school/grade/class on free/reduced lunch
- What screening services are already available
- Willingness and ability to provide pre- and post-event test scores, such as MAP tests, semester grade improvement, any anecdotal stories of academic or reading improvement
- Any programs the district/school/grade/class is already using
- Ability of host to provide volunteers
- Approximate timeline of when the event would take place
- Ability of the host to communicate event with parents, local community, etc. and to coordinate distribution and collection of consent documents

NFCV will evaluate your application and follow up with any questions or clarification needed. Depending on demand and available resources, NFCV will provide information on timeline and feasibility of your project.

Conclusion

NFCV would like to thank you for your interest and support in providing these critical services to the children of Nebraska. We look forward to partnering with you.