

Editorial Note: This is the 83rd year the Battle Creek Host Lions Club has been selling the newspaper as a fundraiser to support Battle Creek and county-wide programs. This year the 2011 LIONS EXTRA Newspaper pays tribute to the efforts of the Calhoun County Public Health Department's Hearing and Vision Screening Program for preschool and school-age children. It focuses on the program, children who have benefited, and individuals that have made the program successful.

LIONS SUPPORT THE CALHOUN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT HEARING AND VISION SCREENING PROGRAM

Written by Kristin Roux and Heidi Fast

The Calhoun County Public Health Department (CCPHD) wishes to thank the Battle Creek (BC) Host Lions Club for its generous monetary support of the hearing and vision program. The Host Lions Club annually donates approximately \$8,000 to the CCPHD screening program. Funds raised through advertisements and the LIONS EXTRA Newspaper, as well as individual donations made during the paper drive, support the program. We wish to thank the BC Host Lions, other clubs in the county that are participating in the newspaper sales drive this year, and those advertisers and individuals that have contributed or purchase the paper for their help.

The CCPHD provides the required hearing and vision screenings for children living in and attending school in Calhoun County, including home-schooled children. Screening is available to all children in Calhoun County without cost, and screenings are conducted in public, private, and charter schools, as well as in the health department offices. Of the 12,295 children screened for vision in Calhoun County during 2010, approximately 17% were identified as needing a referral for an eye exam. Of the 8,402 children screened for hearing in Calhoun County during 2010, approximately 6% were identified as needing a medical referral.

Michigan law requires that local health departments offer hearing and vision screening at least once between the ages of 3 and 5 years, and school-age children are screened in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 (vision) and in kindergarten, grade 2, and grade 4 (hearing). The tests used to screen preschool and school-age children aid in identifying children who may have vision and hearing problems that require additional evaluation and follow-up.

Many children enter school with vision problems. Children usually do not know that they see differently. Early identification of an eye problem is important. Conditions like amblyopia, or lazy eye, can be prevented if detected and treated during pre-school years.

The vision screening of pre-school and school-age children includes tests for clearness of vision, eye muscle balance, nearsightedness, farsightedness, and symptoms of eyesight problems using screening and testing procedures approved by the Michigan Department of Community Health

(MDCH). Technicians are also looking for conditions such as improper eye alignment, drooping eyelid, abnormal eye movement, and unequal pupil size.

A referral is made to an eye care professional after a child has failed one or more of the battery of vision screening tests. Only a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist can diagnose visual conditions. Follow-up for all referrals is conducted to assure that care is received.

Many children are unaware that they hear differently from their peers. Early identification of hearing problems can alleviate speech/language delays, social/emotional delays, academic delays, and psychological delays. The hearing screening program is a 3-step process that involves a preliminary screening. If the child does not pass that screening, an intermediate screening (and audiogram when necessary) will be completed approximately four weeks later. Referrals to see a health care provider are made based on MDCH-established criteria for interpreting the audiogram results.

The GOALS of the hearing screening program are to:

- identify hearing loss in children as early as possible,
- reduce preventable hearing loss and ear disease by providing assistance in obtaining prompt medical care for children at-risk for hearing loss,
- identify hearing impaired children so that their educational, medical, and social needs may be defined, and
- help parents and school personnel to understand the child's needs related to the hearing loss.

A referral is made to the child's primary care provider office, pediatrician's office, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) physician's office, or audiologist's office. Follow-up for all referrals is conducted to assure that care is received.

For more information, call (269) 969-6389. Additional information about the services provided by the CCPHD can be found at www.calhouncountymi.gov/publichealth. Additional information about the Michigan Hearing and Vision Program can be found at www.mihearingvision.com.



A Word to Parents or Guardians - Prepare Your Child for Success in School.

Have your child’s hearing and vision tested by your local health department beginning at age 3 and again just before the start of kindergarten.

Your child's hearing and vision impacts their success in school. An undiagnosed hearing problem may impact your child's ability to pay attention or follow directions. An undiagnosed vision problem may affect your child's ability to read and learn.

Your local health department works in conjunction with your child’s school to provide hearing and vision screenings based on the chart to the right.

Hearing and Vision Screening Requirements		
Pre-school	X	X
Kindergarten	X	
1st Grade		X
2nd Grade	X	
3rd Grade		X
4th Grade	X	
5th Grade		X
7th Grade		X
9th		X

*Some local public health departments may schedule screenings at different intervals. Call your local public health department for more information.

Does Your Child Have a Hearing or Vision Problem?

Your child may have a hearing problem if he/she:

- Has a history of ear infections or drainage from the ears
- Wants the television or radio louder
- Misunderstands directions or asks to have things repeated

Your child may have a vision problem if he/she:

- Squints or tilts the head to see
- Has an eye that crosses or wanders when the child is ill or tired
- Holds objects close to the eyes

If your child experiences any of these symptoms, contact the Calhoun County Public Health Department now to have their hearing and vision tested. Phone: (269) 969-6389. For more information, visit our website at www.calhouncountymi.gov/publichealth.

OTHER PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY AREA LIONS CLUBS

Eye support to children of the Battle Creek Public Schools provided by the Host Lions:

Vision Support to Qualifying Low Income and Special Needs residents of Calhoun County. Cereal City Lions Club provides vision services

In addition to children services support provided by the Battle Creek Host Lions the Battle Creek area Lions Clubs are provided b