

Louisiana Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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Louisiana Chapter of the American
Academy of Pediatrics

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Joint Recommendation for Adjustment to Mass Vision and Hearing Screening Program in Schools for the 2020- 2021 School Year due to the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic Response

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigation strategies have been developed to reduce SARS-CoV-2 transmission in school settings. School nurses have been given several additional responsibilities required to support these mitigation efforts. Therefore, we reviewed the current recommendations for vision and hearing screening in schools to determine whether adjustments could be made to allow school nursing staff to meet SARS-CoV-2 responsibilities while minimizing the potential negative effects of mass screening protocols and of modifying the vision and hearing screening schedule.

The Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (LA AAP) and the Louisiana School Nurse Organization (LSNO) agree that school-based vision and hearing screening is an effective approach to detect early visual and auditory impairments and remove barriers to academic success. We also agree that all scheduled periodic screenings are necessary. However, to adequately respond to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic we feel that temporary adjustments to the screening schedule are necessary.

We propose the following plan be implemented during the 2020- 2021 school year:

The following children will undergo vision and hearing screening this fall:

- All Pre-K and Kindergarten students, as new enterers
- Any student with a reported concern
- Individual students for Special Education, Title or SBLC requests

The following children will have vision and hearing screening suspended until the control of SARS-CoV-2 allows for mass assembly. This may be possible in the spring semester, if mass assembly is restored based on the Phase of Louisiana recovery and the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 in the local community.

- Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11

With this approach, we are utilizing our manpower to focus on children who may not have had any screening prior to school entry.

Allowing this adjustment will support the efforts of school nurses to address the SARS-CoV-2 response required to protect children, teachers, and staff during this pandemic while spreading the screenings throughout the academic year.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics if you would like to further discuss.

Sincerely,

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