



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local Newspapers

From: Alison Fegan, Health Educator

Re: Press Release – Hearing and Vision Tests Can Improve Learning

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Hearing and Vision Tests Can Improve Learning

Ask any veteran elementary teacher and they know at least one student who was struggling in class who couldn't clearly hear the instructions or see the chalkboard from their desk. Once the vision or hearing problem was corrected, this same student began to excel in school. Hearing and vision problems are not always noticeable. Michigan law requires hearing and vision screenings to be offered throughout the state of Michigan.

The Central Michigan District Health Department offers hearing and vision screenings for all children who attend public and private schools and for those who are home-schooled without charge to the parent(s). Our technicians are trained and experienced in the latest screening techniques and conduct hearing screens for children in kindergarten, 2nd and 4th grades. Vision screenings are provided for children in 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th grades. Any child entering kindergarten for the first time is screened for both hearing and vision problems. All children who do not pass the screenings are re-screened and then referred when needed for follow-up care with the appropriate medical care provider and other related services.

Did you know that?

- Ninety-percent of children who receive an initial screening are found to have normal hearing. The other 10% will receive a follow-up screening or an audiogram (a graphic display of a child's hearing levels).
- In 2005/2006, 345,839 preschool and school-age children were screened for hearing problems, and 14,598 referrals were made to medical doctors. Within the Central Michigan District Health Department, 6,028 children completed the hearing screening and 528 referrals were made.
- Impaired vision is one of the most common of health problems affecting children and it is estimated that between 20-25% of children in Michigan have a visual defect.
- In 2005/2006, 480,114 preschool and school-age children were screened for visual problems, and 42,670 referrals were made to eye doctors. Within the Central Michigan

District Health Department, 7,923 children completed the vision screening and 1,106 referrals made.

- The hearing and vision screening programs administered by the Michigan Department of Community Health have been in place for more than half a century.
- The Michigan hearing and vision screening programs have long been recognized for their excellent models for other states to imitate. Both programs are carefully standardized so that each child screened, regardless of where they reside, receives consistent screening, referral, and follow-up services.

If you have any questions about the hearing and vision services available for your child, or if you do not wish to have your child tested in the K-12 school setting, please contact your local branch office of your health department. The ability to see and hear clearly is priceless and our goal is to find any difficulties early.

Statistics for this article were provided by the Michigan Department of Community Health. This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the local residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.

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