

Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program

Information for Health Professionals

The Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program (PSNHRP) is seeking the support of Health Professionals to increase community awareness of the vision screening program. This screening is conducted by Registered Nurses in schools for prep students across Queensland.

Who are we?

- The Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program was established in 2016 and is a state-wide initiative, which aims to optimise the health and wellbeing of children during their transition to primary school, with a focus on prep vision screening.
- Registered Nurses are employed in all Hospital and Health Services across Queensland to provide vision screening to prep students in state, catholic and independent schools. They are supported by the PSNHRP Hub, based in Brisbane, to ensure consistent service delivery and maintenance of service delivery data.

How is vision screening conducted?

- PSNHRP Registered Nurses work independently on a designated caseload of schools and manage the screening process from first contact with the school to post-screening follow-up.
- The PSNHRP utilises two tools to screen for common visual abnormalities, including amblyopia (lazy eye), which if not detected and treated early can lead to blindness. These tools are:
 - PARR 4m Letter Matching Visual Acuity Chart
 - Welch Allyn Spot Vision Screener
- When used in conjunction, these tools have an 80-90 per cent accuracy rate in detecting visual abnormalities as shown in recent international studies.
- If a visual abnormality is identified during screening, parents/guardians are notified and provided with a referral to an eye health professional for further assessment. Ongoing follow-up is also conducted by the Registered Nurse following screening.
- In 2024, 74 per cent of children who were referred by the PSNHRP were found to have a confirmed visual abnormality. As evidenced in a recent PSNHRP retrospective study, use of the two tools for screening significantly reduces the number of false positive referrals (Li, et al 2023).



Children's Health Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



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How do we complement other Child Health Services?

- While visual acuity tests assess sharpness of vision and may detect some hyperopia and amblyopia, they overlook several critical risk factors such as strabismus, refractive error, and pupil abnormalities. Additionally, individuals with normal acuity may still experience vision issues, highlighting the limitations of acuity tests alone.
- The two screening tools used by PSNHRP test beyond visual acuity, promoting the detection of early-stage conditions with greater accuracy.
- New visual problems can occur after a child has been screened. The treatment of visual abnormalities is most effective prior to the age of seven, therefore ongoing vision screening during this important period of neural development is recommended.
- During consultations, including the four to five-year developmental assessment by Child Health Nurses, please advise parents/guardians that the PSNHRP will be offering additional vision screening for their child, when they are in prep, through their school.
- The PSNHRP welcomes and values any questions or feedback from health professionals. If you would like further information regarding the program, please contact us.

Contact us

Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program

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References

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