



## **Guidance for Providing Mass Dental, Hearing, and Vision Screening and Dental Preventive Services at Schools, Childcares and Programs for Children and Youth**

**May 10, 2021**

The following Tip sheet was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health to provide recommendations about how to provide mass dental, vision, and hearing screenings (and certain dental preventive measures) at schools, childcares, and programs for children and youth while protecting against COVID-19 transmission. This guidance is **not** for individual health assessments of children and youth with pre-identified risk factors or concerns. Those children should receive services through their healthcare providers and/or assessment teams.

It will be posted at <http://www.sfcpc.org>. This Tip sheet may change as information is updated.

### **Summary of Changes since the 3/4/2021 Version**

- Mass hearing screening is now permitted.

**AUDIENCE:** Staff and teachers at schools, childcares, and programs for children and youth; healthcare providers performing vision, dental, and hearing screening; and parents of children who may receive health screenings.

**BACKGROUND:** Dental, vision, and hearing abnormalities are significant causes of health problems in young children and can lead to pain, infection, and developmental problems. Mass screening and preventive services are effective ways to prevent these issues in children. Measures can be taken to protect against COVID-19 transmission while providing such services.

## **Recommendations**

### Prepare for health services

*Schools and childcare programs should work with healthcare providers and their agencies to plan for safe, efficient, and successful screenings.*

- **Identify an appropriate area for health screening services**
  - Consider providing services outdoors, if possible. Outdoor spaces may be covered with a tent, canopy, or other shelter, as long as the shelter complies with: (1) CDPH guidance regarding “Use of Temporary Structures for Outdoor Business Operations” (available at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Use-of-Temporary-Structures-for-Outdoor-Business-Operations.aspx>); and (2) SFDPH’s guidance on “Safer Ways to Use New Outdoor Shared Spaces for Allowed Activities During COVID-19” (available at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/Guidance-Shared-Outdoor-Spaces.pdf>).
  - Well-ventilated, indoor spaces may also be used. For detailed guidance on ventilation, see <https://www.sfcpc.org/ventilation> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools->



[childcare/ventilation.html](#)

- Ensure that there is enough space for children to wait their turn with at least 6 feet of distance between them. Consider placing signs on the floor to help with spacing.
- **Determine who will receive services on a given day**
  - When identifying children for services, note that education programs may have alternating days of in-person attendance and providers may need to visit facilities multiple times to screen all eligible children.
  - Children currently isolated or quarantined may not receive health screening services. Consider whether alternate dates and times may accommodate these children, if they otherwise would have been eligible to receive screening services.

Health screeners and students should follow existing safety protocols

- **Screen the healthcare provider(s) prior to entry for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure**
  - The healthcare provider(s) should be considered visitors on campus following screening measures listed in the [SFDPH Screening Form for Non-Personnel](#). For more information about screening, see [www.sfdcp.org/screen](http://www.sfdcp.org/screen).
  - Trainees of healthcare providers may accompany the supervising provider to the facility and participate in screening and preventive services, subject to the policies and regulations of their licensing agencies and educational institutions. Trainees must follow the health and safety guidance provided in this document and by their educational institution.
  - Record information about visiting healthcare provider(s), such as their name, date-of-visit, and contact information for example. This may be important if a positive COVID-19 case is discovered later on.
- **Follow existing safety practices about personal protective measures**
  - All children should perform hand hygiene before receiving health screening
  - All children should wear face coverings (unless already exempted by existing policies) and maintain at least 6 feet of physical distancing until told to do otherwise by the healthcare provider.
  - Limit the number of children waiting in the screening area based on available space. If necessary, call one child at a time to the screening area.
    - At most, only children within an already existing school group or cohort should be sent to the health screening area at the same time
    - If multiple groups of children will be receiving services on the same day, children from different groups should not wait in line together. A second group can line up for services after the entire first group is finished.
  - Record the names, dates, time-in, and time-out of children who received health screening. This may be important if a positive COVID-19 case is discovered later on.



### Protect against COVID-19 transmission during screening services

- When performing health screening and prevention services, providers should follow health protocols and use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as determined by their Employer, with consideration of guidance from Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other industry standards (referenced below). Additionally, providers should:
  - Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distancing between screener and the student, whenever possible and while not actively performing healthcare services.
  - Wear face coverings at all times. Unvaccinated providers may consider wearing a face shield when they anticipate being less than 6 feet from children.
  - Follow usual industry standards and healthcare regulations for cleaning and disinfection of equipment and shared items. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html> for more information.
  - Consider using disposable equipment (such disposable eye patches or occluders, and disposable headphone covers) for items that will touch the child's face, if possible.

### Notify SFDPH if COVID-19 infection is later confirmed or suspected

- If an individual involved in a health screening (child, staff, or healthcare provider) develops symptoms or test results concerning for COVID-19 within 14 days of receiving a health screening or service, the relevant school, program, or agency should immediately notify the SFDPH Schools Hub by emailing [cases.schools@sfdph.org](mailto:cases.schools@sfdph.org) (please put SECURE: in the subject line) OR calling (628) 217-7499.
- Refer to the [Quick Guide for suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#) at [sfdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare](https://www.sfdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare) for more information.
- For confirmed COVID-19 cases, use the [Exposure and Investigation tool](#) to collect the important details about the case BEFORE contacting the School/Childcare Team.

## Resources

- San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)
  - COVID-19 General Information  
<https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
  - COVID-19 Information on Schools, Childcare, and Youth Programs  
<https://www.sfdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - COVID-19  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/index.html>
  - Oral Health  
<https://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/index.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html>
  - Infection Control Guidance for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html>



- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA),  
Resuming Services in Schools During COVID-19  
<https://www.asha.org/practice/resuming-services-in-schools-during-covid-19/>  
<https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Hearing-Screening/>
- Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA),  
Information for Dentistry Workers  
<https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/control-prevention/dentistry>
- American Dental Association,  
COVID-19 Safety and Clinical Resources  
<https://success.ada.org/en/practice-management/patients/safety-and-clinical>
- US Preventive Services Task Force  
Vision Screening Recommendations  
<https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/vision-in-children-ages-6-months-to-5-years-screening>
- Prevent Blindness,  
Considerations for Children's Vision Screening Programs During the Covid-19 Pandemic  
<https://preventblindness.org/covid-19-childrens-vision-screening/>
- American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus  
Pediatric Vision Screening Guidance during the COVID-19 Pandemic  
<https://aapos.org/education/allied-health/covid>