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**Practicum Site:** GoCheck Kids

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## ***Vision Screening Challenges for Kids beyond Pediatric Practices***



**Introduction:** Vision disorders are one of the top impairments for children and can lead to vision loss, developmental delays, and poor school performance. Vision screening is a low barrier method to identify individuals needing a more expensive and time-consuming eye exam. To better understand the limitations and barriers of vision screenings outside of pediatric medical settings, we studied the Head Start and state school policies on vision screening data collection.

**Methods:** Working with GoCheck Kids (a pediatric vision screening device manufacturer), we examined existing population-level studies for vision screening data. Head Start laws and policy were analyzed for data collection methods and screening requirements. Last, publicly available state policies and procedures were evaluated for requirements to collect data.

**Results:** Minimal research has been completed on Head Start and school-aged vision screenings, so there was not enough data to obtain a clear understanding of behavioral limitations. Additionally, only one population-level survey was found that looked at youth vision screening. As a result of finding such little data, the focus of the research shifted toward the need for aggregated pediatric vision screening information. State policy review showed that 35 states require some level of data collection. We created a position paper on the benefits of using public schools to compile vision screening data.

**Conclusions:** There are no reliable sets of data with which researchers can complete an analysis of the behavioral and environmental barriers to vision screening or track changes in youth vision screening rates, nationally. This absence led to the creation of an impactful policy paper on the importance of creating a centralized uniform database of public-school screenings. Overall, increasing awareness of vision screening and pushing for more data collection provides an opportunity to impact the quality of life for many children.