



HSCSN Medical Necessity Criteria & Authorization Requirements

Vision Therapy Guidelines

Version 02/08 | Revised 6/08, 03/14

Approved 12/7/09, 12/8/10, 12/8/11, 12/11/12, 03/08/17, 03/08/18, 03/12/20

Background:

Vision therapy encompasses a wide variety of non-surgical methods provided by ophthalmologists or optometrists to correct or improve specific visual dysfunctions, including strabismus, amblyopia, convergence insufficiency and nystagmus. A variety of visual training programs have been proposed to address learning disabilities, however, no scientific evidence supports claims that the academic abilities of children with learning disabilities can be improved with vision therapy. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology (AAPOS), and the American Association of Ophthalmology (AAO) issued a joint statement in July 1992 stating that there is no scientific evidence to support the claim “that the academic abilities of dyslexic or learning-disabled children can be improved with treatment based on: (a) visual training, including muscle exercises, ocular pursuit, tracking exercises, or ‘training’ glasses (with or without bifocals or prisms); (b) neurological organizational training (laterality training, crawling, balance board, perceptual training) or (c) tinted or colored lenses.” Hayes, Inc. provided an updated report in July 2012 based on a review of peer-reviewed medical literature and found for individuals with dyslexia and other reading or learning disabilities “the majority of studies found no benefit of colored filters relative to placebo or no treatment conditions.” In addition, “there was limited evidence regarding the efficacy of other types of vision therapy for treatment of dyslexia and other reading or learning disabilities.”

Definitions:

Types of vision therapy:

1. Orthoptic and pleoptic vision training - exercises designed to improve the function of the eye muscles, i.e. accommodative and convergence dysfunctions, heterophorias and refractive errors. Pleoptics are exercises designed to improve impaired vision when there is no evidence of organic eye diseases.
2. Vision therapy (also called visual training and behavioral vision therapy) - eye movement and hand-eye coordination training techniques used to improve visual processing skills, learning efficiency and visual/sensory motor integration.

Details:

- I. HSCSN will provide coverage for Orthoptic/Pleoptic vision training for the following conditions:
 - A. Convergence insufficiency
 - B. Amblyopia
 - C. Strabismus
 - D. Nystagmus
- II. Vision therapy for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), dyslexia, learning disabilities and sensory motor integration is not covered. It has not been shown to be effective treatment and is considered

experimental and investigational for these diagnoses.

- III. When children have learning problems that are suspected to be associated with visual defects, the pediatric ophthalmologist should be consulted by the primary care provider
- IV. Prior authorization for vision training is required. The primary physician must submit a referral for visual training with a supporting letter of medical necessity to include documentation of a comprehensive eye examination and standardized test results.
- V. When the diagnosis and documentation criteria are met, one initial visit for an evaluation by an approved ophthalmologist or optometrist will be authorized.
- VI. Authorization of ongoing visual training treatment visits, the following must be submitted by the evaluating ophthalmologist or optometrist:
 - A. Treatment plan indicating the number of weeks and type of treatment activities to be performed.
 - B. List of activities taught to the patient to be practiced at home
- VII. Vision therapy visits require the following ICD-10 diagnosis codes:
 - A. Amblyopia - H53.09-H53.029 (limited to age 15 and under)
 - B. Strabismus: Esotropia, Exotropia, Heterotropia (Esophoria, Exophoria) and Mechanical, Paralytic, other specified strabismus - H50.0-H50.89
 - C. Convergence insufficiency or palsy - H51.11-H51.8
 - D. Nystagmus and other Ocular Motor Dysfunction – H55.0-H55.89
- VIII. Vision therapy notes and recommendations from the ophthalmologist or optometrist must be reviewed by the PCP and submitted to HSCSN for visits exceeding 32 per year and for exceptions to the diagnoses listed in Section VII.

References:

1. Hayes, Inc. Vision Therapy for Convergence Insufficiency and Accommodative Dysfunction in Children, December 17, 2013. Accessed March 25, 2014. Available at URL: <https://hayesinc.com/subscribers/displaySubscriberArticle.do?articleId=16084>
2. American Academy of Pediatrics: Learning Disabilities, Dyslexia and Vision: A subject review. Pediatrics Vol. 102 (5): November 1998, pp. 1217-1219. Available at URL address: <http://www.aap.org/policy/re9825.html>
3. American Academy of Ophthalmology Complementary Therapy Task Force. 2001 Sep. Complementary therapy assessment: vision therapy for learning disabilities. Accessed December 10, 2007. Available at URL address: <http://www.aao.org/education/guidelines/cta/loader.cfm?url=commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=1224>
4. Hayes, Inc. Vision Therapy for Dyslexia and Other Reading and Learning Disabilities, Hayes Directory, July 17, 2012.
5. United Healthcare – Oxford Health Plans. “Orthoptic and Pleoptic Therapy.” Policy number VISION 011.2 T1. Effective January 2005. Retrieved December-1-07.
6. Aetna Clinical Policy Bulletins: “Vision Therapy.” Policy number 0489. Effective October 2006. Retrieved November -11-2007.
7. Equality care. Revised Vision Policy – Vision Services and Vision Therapy, July 2006.

**For more information, visit hscsnhealthplan.org.
For reasonable accommodation, please call (202) 467-2737**

ENGLISH

If you do not speak and/or read English, please call (202) 467-2737.
A representative will assist you.

SPANISH

Si no habla ni lee inglés, llame al (202) 467-2737. Un representante lo asistirá.

VIETNAMESE

Nếu quý vị không nói và/hoặc đọc Tiếng Anh, vui lòng gọi (202) 467-2737.
Một người đại diện sẽ hỗ trợ quý vị.'

AMHARIC

እንግሊዘኛ መናገር/ወይም መንበብ ካልቻሉ፣ እባክዎ በዚህ ስልክ ቁጥር (202) 467-2737.
ይደውሉ። ተወካይ ይረዳዎታል።

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중에 연락해 주십시오. 상담원이 도움을 드릴 것입니다.

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ကိုခေါ်ပါ။ တစ်ဦးကကိုယ်စားလှယ်သင်ကူညီကြလိမ့်မည်.

CANTONESE

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اگر انگلیسی صحبت نمی کنید/نمی خوانید، لطفاً بین ساعات
با شمار هتماس بگیرید. یکی از نمایندگان ما به شما کمک خواهد کرد

POLISH

Osoby, które nie potrafią mówić lub czytać po angielsku, mogą zadzwonić na numer (202) 467-2737.
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HINDI

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wakiil ayaa ku caawin doona.

HMONG

Yog tias koj tsis hais thiab/lossis nyeem tau Lus As Kiv, thov hu rau (202) 467-2737.
Ib tug neeg sawv cev yuav pab tau koj.

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Se ha difficoltà a parlare e/o leggere la lingua inglese, chiami il numero (202) 467-2737.
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TAGALOG

Kung hindi ka nakakapagsalita at/o nakakapagbasa ng Ingles, pakitawagan ang (202) 467-2737.
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JAPANESE

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