

National Myopia Prevention Programme

Eye Care Week 2008

Activity Guide

Pre-School



Content

	<i>Page</i>
❖ <i>Introduction</i>	<i>2</i>
❖ <i>“Keep myopia at bay, go outdoors and play!” event at HealthZone</i>	<i>3</i>
❖ <i>Suggested activities for Eye Care Week 2008</i>	<i>4</i>
❖ <i>Annex A: Feedback form</i>	<i>8</i>
❖ <i>Annex B: Booking form for event at HealthZone</i>	<i>9</i>
❖ <i>Annex C: Key messages for NMPP 2008</i>	<i>10</i>
❖ <i>Annex D: Letter to parents and “I pledge” Contract</i>	<i>11</i>
❖ <i>Annex E: Contact List of HPB Staff</i>	<i>13</i>

INTRODUCTION

Dear Pre-school Principals and Teachers

It's time for Eye Care Week!

The National Myopia Prevention Programme (NMPP) would like to encourage all pre-schools to conduct eye care related activities and lessons during this week, to teach children the importance of their eyes and how to take care of them.

Singapore has one of the highest rates of myopia or short-sightedness. Children are becoming myopic at a younger age. A local study found that by age 7, about 28% of our children are myopic. This is a serious issue that warrants our attention, because it increases our children's risk of developing severe myopia which may lead to serious complications including blindness.

Myopia is partly inherited (in the genes) and partly due to environmental factors. Research shows that excessive near work is a risk factor for myopia progression. There is also emerging evidence suggesting that engaging in outdoor activities might have a protective effect against myopia. Recent studies have found that children who spent more time outdoors were less likely to be myopic. Why this is so is still not fully understood yet.

The theme for NMPP 2008 is "***Keep Myopia at Bay, Go Outdoors and Play!***" The key messages are:

1. Spend more time on outdoor activities everyday
2. Spend less time on continuous near work, especially if it is unnecessary, for example, playing computer, handheld or hand phone games.

This year, Eye Care Week will be held from **24 – 28 March 2008**. Schools are encouraged to use this guide to plan and carry out the suggested activities. (A soft copy of this guide is also available at <http://www.hpb.gov.sg>.) Schools can also plan and implement their own programmes bearing in mind, the above two key messages. Other good eye care habits are indicated in **Annex B**.

We hope that through fun and interactive activities, students will be reminded of the importance of good eyesight and the need to practice habits to prevent the onset or progression of myopia.

We would like to gather some feedback from pre-schools about planning the Eye Care Week for pre-schools. We would be grateful if schools can fill up the feedback form in Annex A and send it back to us, so that we can better plan programmes and activities for 2009. Thank you.

"KEEP MYOPIA AT BAY, GO OUTDOORS AND PLAY!" EVENT AT HEALTHZONE

The Health Promotion Board is pleased to present 'Keep Myopia at Bay, Go Outdoors & Play! Event @ HealthZone' ~ a 3-hour fun-learning programme targeted at pre-schoolers. What you need to do is to come to HealthZone between 24th and 28th March 2008 and get onboard a unique journey to discover one of our body's most important part – our precious eyes!

This programme comprises of (i) fun-filled outdoor activities by our Garden Terrace, (ii) fascinating workshops at Health Studio and (iii) an experiential tour at HealthZone exhibition centre. Children will be amazed at the close link between lifestyle habits and healthy eyes for life!

If your school is keen to join in the fun, kindly fill up the registration form (Annex B) and return it to us via Fax: 6538 7725 OR Email: HPB_Health_Zone@hpb.gov.sg by **7 March 2008**.

This event is run on a **first-come-first-serve basis**. Hence, sign up today to avoid disappointment! For further information, please contact the HealthZone team at Phone: 1800-435-3616 OR Email: HPB_Health_Zone@hpb.gov.sg.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR EYE CARE WEEK 2008

The following activities are suggested for pre-schools to plan and implement during Eye Care Week 2008. Teachers are bound to have other great ideas, so please do go ahead and carry them out. We would love for you to email your ideas to us at hpb_shp@hpb.gov.sg, so that we can in turn share them with other schools.

A. The Pencil Experiment

This is a simple experiment that teaches children to take care of their eyes because they are precious.

Equipment: Pencils (the type with an eraser at the top)

Mechanism of activity:

- Distribute 2 pencils to each child.
- Tell the children to hold 1 pencil in each hand. Their arms should be apart and raised till shoulder level.
- Instruct the children to try to move their hands closer so that the erasers on each pencil touch one another.
- Then tell the children to place their arms back in the original position. Ask them to do the same action, but with 1 eye closed.
- Most children will not be able to connect the erasers as easily as they are able to when both of their eyes are open. This is because with both eyes, the brain is able to have more accurate depth perception.

(Activity adapted from <http://kidshealth.org>)

B. Outdoor Games

As the key message for myopia prevention is “**Keep Myopia at Bay, Go Outdoors and Play!**” we encourage schools to make use of the outdoor environment as much as possible in their activities.

Outdoor Game Mat

All schools will be receiving a giant game mat from the Health Promotion Board in mid April. We encourage all schools to make use of the game mat for children to learn

about taking care of their eyes, even after Eye Care Week. We strongly recommend that the mat be used in outdoors, if space is available in your school.

“Eye Care Specialist” game

The concept of this game is similar to “What is the time Mr Wolf?” It involves a big group of children in a controlled and safe outdoor space. No equipment is needed, and it is played as follows:

- Select a student as the ‘Eye care specialist’.
- The ‘Eye care specialist’ will stand far away from the rest of the group with his/her back facing the group (each of the other children in the group will be known as the ‘Eyes’*).
- The game starts with the group shouting “How do we keep myopia at bay”?
- The ‘Eye care specialist’ should turn round to face the group and reply “Go outdoors and play!” and then turn back again.
- The other children are then each allowed to take 3 steps towards the ‘Eye Care Specialist’. How big a step they want to take is left up to each child.
- This goes on until the ‘Eye care specialist’ decides to shout “Let’s Play!” and everyone will run around till the ‘Eye care specialist’ catches another student to take over his role.

*Having other children named as the ‘Eyes’ will help illustrate that to fight myopia, they should take good care of their eyes; one good way to do this is to go for regular eye checks or get advice, which is signified by moving towards the ‘Eye Care Specialist’.

After the game, teachers can reiterate that children should spend less time on near work and go outdoors to play more often.

This game is adapted from one of the winning entries for “Let’s Play Outdoors!” Competition conducted in Eye Care Week 2007. The game is developed by Chen Zhijiang, Zhou Runfa and Leslie Choo Han Hui of Yishun Primary School.

Balloons galore!

This is a simple and fun game for children to be active in the outdoors. 30 to 40 balloons are needed (there should be more balloons than the number of children involved in the game). Divide the children into 2 groups. Draw a line or place a barrier between the two groups. Give each group equal number of balloons at start. Once the game begins, children are supposed to toss the balloons on their side over to the next group’s area. After

1 minute the teacher can stop the game and ask the children to count how many balloons they have on their side. The side with the least balloons wins.

To vary the game, teachers can use different coloured balloons and specify the colour that should be tossed over, or have numbers written on the balloons, and each group is to toss the ones that they don't need over to the other team in order to form a number chain of say 1 – 10. The group with the most number of 'unwanted' numbers will lose the game then.

C. Engaging Parents

“We pledge to practise good eye care habits”

Parents play an important role in fighting myopia as the home is the place where children spend most of their time in besides the school. It is therefore important that the eye care habits taught in school are reinforced at home.

In **Annex C**, we have drafted a 'contract' for children that requires them to pledge to practise good eye care habits. A letter to parents explaining what this contract is all about is also included. You can customise this letter to include your school logo by downloading the softcopy of this guide which can be found at <http://www.hpb.gov.sg>. Encourage your pre-schoolers to sign or put their thumbprint on the contract, promising to practise good eye care habits both at home and in school. Have them then take the contract home and ask their parents to sign on it as well, The family can display the signed contract at a prominent place to serve as reminder to practise good eye care habits.

Talk for Parents

The school can consider organizing a talk for parents on eye care and other health related topics. Alternatively, the school can consider organizing one such talk together with other pre-schools in the neighbourhood, or with a nearby primary school. If you need more resources from HPB, do contact us (please refer to **Annex D** for the contact list of HPB staff). Please note that your request is subject to the availability of speakers and resources, on a first-come-first-served basis. While we will be happy to provide you with contact details of speakers, a nominal fee may be charged by the speakers.

Activities for families

Some schools may plan activities or occasions for students and their families. During these occasions, schools can encourage good eye care habits. Schools can approach HPB for resources such as booklets or exhibition panels. However, please notify HPB at least 3 weeks before your event, as resources are available on a first-come-first-served basis

Activities for parent/families need not be conducted only during Eye Care Week. They can be done at any time that is convenient for both the school and the parents.

FEEDBACK FORM
NATIONAL MYOPIA PREVENTION PROGRAMME 2008

We would be grateful if you could complete and submit this form by **19 March 2008**. Your valuable feedback and suggestions will help us to better plan for next year's Eye Care Week .

Please submit this form to:

**Pre-School and Primary School Outreach Dept
 Health Promotion Board
 3 Second Hospital Avenue
 Singapore 168937
 Attn: Ms Cheryl Choy
 Fax: 6438 8226
 Email: hpb_shp@hpb.gov.sg**

**A nil reply would be appreciated*

Eye Care Week (24 - 28 March 2008)

My school is happy to support the Eye Care Week initiative.

My school will not be organising an Eye Care Week. The reason for this is: _____

Suggestions/comments for HPB to plan for Eye Care Week for pre-schools:

Name of School : _____

Name of Teacher-in-Charge : _____

Contact Number (O): _____ (H/P) : _____

Fax Number: _____ Email: _____

**'KEE'KEEP MYOPIA AT BAY, GO OUTDOORS & PLAY! EVENT @ HEALTHZONE
~ A MYOPIA PREVENTION PROGRAMME FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS
BOOKING FORM**

NAME OF CENTRE : _____
 ADDRESS : _____
 CONTACT PERSON : _____ DESIGNATION : _____
 TEL NO. : _____(O) _____(HP) FAX NO. : _____
 E-MAIL ADDRESS : _____

BOOKING REQUEST (Please tick accordingly)			
DATE / TIME	NO. OF PAX	DATE / TIME	NO. OF PAX
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Mar (Mon), 9.00am – 11.30am		<input type="checkbox"/> 27 Mar (Thu), 9.00am – 11.30am	
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Mar (Mon), 9.45am – 12.15pm		<input type="checkbox"/> 27 Mar (Thu), 9.45am – 12.15pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Mar (Mon), 1.30pm – 4.00pm		<input type="checkbox"/> 27 Mar (Thu), 1.30pm – 4.00pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> 25 Mar (Tue), 9.00am – 11.30am		<input type="checkbox"/> 28 Mar (Fri), 9.00am – 11.30am	
<input type="checkbox"/> 25 Mar (Tue), 9.45am – 12.15pm		<input type="checkbox"/> 28 Mar (Fri), 9.45am – 12.15pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> 25 Mar (Tue), 1.30pm – 4.00pm		<input type="checkbox"/> 28 Mar (Fri), 1.30pm – 4.00pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> 26 Mar (Wed), 9.00am – 11.30am			
<input type="checkbox"/> 26 Mar (Wed), 9.45am – 12.15pm			
<input type="checkbox"/> 26 Mar (Wed), 1.30pm – 4.00pm			
Category	Registration Fee:	No. of pax	Fee Payable
Child (Group < 30 participants)	\$1.50		\$
Adult (Group < 30 participants)	\$3.00		\$
Child (Group > 30 participants)	\$1.20		\$
Adult (Group > 30 participants)	\$2.50		\$
<i>Note: For every 15 children, 1 adult will enjoy free admission.</i>		TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE:	\$

Mode of Payment

- Crossed Cheque (Payable to 'Health Promotion Board') Cash
 IBG (Bank Account No.: 001-900106-4/ Account Name: Health Promotion Board)

Confirmation of the above Booking via

- Email Fax

Important Note:

1. Booking must be made at least 2 weeks before the date of visit.
2. Booking is confirmed upon receipt of written reply from HealthZone.
3. A programme itinerary will be provided.
4. Fast food is not allowed within the premises of HealthZone & Health Promotion Board.
5. Please arrive 30 minutes ahead of scheduled time for registration

FOR OFFICIAL USE

Payment received on: _____

 IBG Cash

Total amount payable: \$ _____

Receipt no.: _____

 Cheque no: _____

Staff/ Date: _____

KEY MESSAGES FOR NMPP

1. **Spend less time on continuous near work activities**, especially unnecessary ones such as playing computer, handheld or hand phone games.
 - a. Near work refers to visual activities at close distance, say at about an arm's length, or when a person looks at or needs to focus on the fine details of an object.
 - b. Examples include reading, writing, drawing, craft work and playing on hand-held devices.
2. **Spend more time on outdoor activities everyday**. Some examples of outdoor activities include ball games, a stroll in the park or neighbourhood or having fun at the playground.
3. Other good eye care habits include:
 - a. Limit duration of continuous near work to 30 to 40 minutes. After 30 to 40 minutes of near work, take a break by looking at a distance or better still, by engaging in an outdoor activity.
 - b. When reading, ensure that the book is at least 30cm away from the eyes.
 - c. When using the computer, ensure the monitor is about 50cm away from the eye.
 - d. When watching TV, ensure that you sit at a distance away from it is appropriate to its size.
 - e. Have your eyes checked at least once a year.
 - f. Eat a balanced diet with at least 2 servings of fruit and 2 servings of vegetables daily.
 - g. Have at least 8 hours of sleep daily.

*** Key messages 1 and 2 should be the focus and emphasis for NMPP.**

Remind your students about these tips when playing/ going outdoors:

- Do not play outdoors during the hottest part of the day, e.g. between 11am and 4pm.
- Put on a cap when the sun is hot.
- Drink plenty of water when outdoors.

Dear Parents,

Singapore has one of the highest rates of myopia or short-sightedness. More of our children are becoming myopic at a younger age. According to a local study, by age 7, about 28% of our children are myopic. This is a serious issue that needs our attention, because it increases our children's risk of developing severe myopia which may lead to other complications including blindness later on in life.

Research on myopia shows that near work (work done at close distance, say within an arm's length) is a risk factor for myopia progression. Recent studies have also found that children who spent more time on outdoors activities were less likely to be myopic. Why this is so is still not fully understood yet.

In school we are encouraging children to practise good eye care habits and we hope that parents help to reinforce these in the home. Your child would have brought home with him/her a contract to practise good eye care habits. He/she has put his/her signature/thumbprint on it. We would appreciate it if you could sign on it as well, and display it prominently in your home so that it will serve as a good reminder to your child.

Thank You.

Principal

Our Eye Care Pledge

We pledge to practise good eye care habits.

We will:

- Spend less time on unnecessary **near work** activities, such as playing computer, handheld or hand phone games;
- Spend **more time** on **outdoor** activities everyday;
- Have regular eyes checks at least once a year.
- Eat a balanced diet with at least 2 servings of fruits and 2 servings of vegetables daily.
- Have at least 8 hours of sleep daily.

Signature/thumbprint of child

Signature of parents

CONTACT LIST OF HPB STAFF

For loan of resources or queries regarding the National Myopia Prevention Programme or any other health promotion programmes, please contact the relevant coordinators at HPB:

Primary and Pre-school Outreach Department:

	COORDINATORS	CONTACT NO.	EMAIL ADDRESS
Childcare centres	Ms Kelly Chan	6435 3056	kelly_chan@hpb.gov.sg
Kindergartens	Ms Serene Sim	6435 3707	serene_sim@hpb.gov.sg

Alternatively, you can also contact the following officers for assistance:

		TEL	EMAIL ADDRESS
Executive	Ms Vicki Huang	6435 3278	vicki_huang@hpb.gov.sg
Senior Officer	Ms Cheryl Choy	6435 3938	cheryl_choy@hpb.gov.sg
Senior Officer	Mr Rohaizat B AB Rahman	6435 3298	rohaizat_ab_rahman@hpb.gov.sg