



June 22, 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to remind you that scoliosis screening is required for all students in the 6th and 8th grades who attend public school in Georgia.

Scoliosis is a sideways curve of the [spine](#). About 3% of children are affected by scoliosis. It can occur at any age but is often noticeable between the ages of 9 and 16, when growth occurs rapidly. Early detection is important to avoid potentially serious problems later in life if a spinal curve is not recognized, treated, and it continues to progress. The screening test is an observation of the child's back when standing and bending forward.

There are options for how the screening can be completed:

- Submit a completed Form #4400, Certificate of Scoliosis screening. Form #4400 can be completed by a physician with an active GA license or person working under the supervision of a physician with an active GA license, the local health department, or licensed school nurse. A completed Form #4400 should be provided to the school within the first 90 days of 6th and 8th grade. Form #4400 can be found at www.dph.georgia.gov.

OR

- Children can participate in a school scoliosis screening event. Students without a completed Form #4400 on file more than 90 days after the start of school will be asked to participate in scoliosis screening during a school screening event.

Parents or guardians can choose to not have their student screened for scoliosis by selecting the opt-out option on Form #4400 or opt-out of the school scoliosis screening event later in the school year.

Thank you for ensuring your child is properly screened for scoliosis.

Sincerely,

Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner and State Health Officer

Five-step scoliosis screening process for volunteers

Early detection of scoliosis is important. The earlier the condition is diagnosed, the more options are available to treat it. Below are helpful steps on how to screen for scoliosis.

1

First position:

Front, standing position

Instructions to the child:

- Face the screener. Put your feet together with equal weight on both legs.
- Breathe in. Let it out, and relax your shoulders. Let your arms hang naturally at your sides.

Look for (see Fig. 1):

- Uneven shoulders (Is one shoulder higher than the other?)
- An arm that hangs farther out from body on one side
- A hip that appears higher on one side



Normal Fig. 1 Abnormal

2

Second position:

Front, bending forward (Adams forward bend test)

Instructions to the child (see Fig. 2a):

- Put your palms together with arms out straight.
- Put your chin on your chest and roll down until your hands touch your feet.

Encourage the child to continue to roll down as far as possible until her back is parallel to the floor. Have the child repeat the Adams forward bend test if she rolls down too quickly or if she rolls down to one side or the other. The child's hands should be pointing at her big toes.

Look for (see Fig. 2b):

- Upper rib prominence on one side
- Lower rib prominence on one side
- Lower back prominence on one side



Fig. 2a



Normal Fig. 2b Abnormal

3

Third position:

Back, standing position

Instructions to the child:

- Turn around (child's back is now to screener). Put your feet together with equal weight on both legs.
- Breathe in. Let it out and relax your shoulders. Let your arms hang naturally at your sides.

Look for (see Fig. 3):

- Uneven shoulders (Is one shoulder higher than the other?)
- A shoulder blade that is more prominent or higher than the other
- An arm that hangs farther out from the body on one side
- Waist fold deeper on one side



Normal Fig. 3 Abnormal

4

Fourth position:

Back, bending away (Adams forward bend test)

Instructions to the child:

- Put your palms together with arms out straight.
- Put your chin on your chest and roll down until your hands touch your feet.

Encourage the child to continue to roll down as far as possible until her back is parallel to the floor. Have the child repeat the Adams forward bend test if she rolls down too quickly or if she rolls down to one side or the other. The child's hands should be pointing at her big toes.

Look for (see Fig. 4):

- Upper rib prominence on one side
- Lower rib prominence on one side
- Lower back prominence on one side



Normal Fig. 4 Abnormal

5

Fifth position:

Side, in a bending position (Adams forward bend test)

Instructions to the child:

- Turn to the side. Put your feet together with equal weight on both legs.
- Put your palms together with arms out straight.
- Put your chin on your chest and roll down until your hands touch your feet.

Look for (see Fig. 5):

- Normal c-shaped curve or more than normal roundness

Encourage the child to continue to roll down as far as possible until her back is parallel to the floor. Have the child repeat the Adams forward bend test if she rolls down too quickly or if she rolls down to one side or the other. The child's hands should be pointing at her big toes.



Normal Fig. 5 Abnormal

Visit choa.org/scoliosis or call 404-255-1933 for more information.



Form #4400
Certificate of Scoliosis Screening

Required for students entering 6th and 8th grade
Form must be completed in its entirety and returned within 90 days of school start

Student name: First Middle Last

Date of Birth: Gender: Male Female Grade:

Student Address: Street City
Zip code County State

Name of School:

Parent/Guardian Contact information:

Name:

Phone number:

Email: @

Scoliosis Screening (Adams Forward Bend Test) Results:

Negative screen:
Needs further evaluation:
Referred to provider:

Screener's Comments:

Screening completed by:

Physician Practice: County Health Department:
Licensed School Nurse:

Screener Information:

Name: Office Address:
Signature: Date:

Parent/Guardian - Complete This Portion Only if Student Will Not Be Screened

Opt-out

I do not want my student to be screened for scoliosis at this time.

The student listed above is currently under professional care for scoliosis.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: Date:

Georgia Department of Public Health

Form #4400

Certificate of Scoliosis Screening

What is scoliosis?

Scoliosis is an abnormal curvature of the spine. If detected early in a child's life, it may be possible to treat the condition and prevent it from becoming more serious.

Who is required to file this Form #4400?

The parent or guardian of a student entering the 6th grade shall furnish to school authority a properly executed DPH Form #4400, Certificate of Scoliosis screening, as early as the first day of 5th and no later than 90 days after the student begins 6th grade. The parent or guardian of a student entering the 8th grade shall furnish to school authority a properly executed Form #4400, Certificate of Scoliosis screening, as early as the first day of 7th and no later than 90 days after the student begins 8th grade.

These time periods were chosen because these are the years when rapid growth occurs, and scoliosis is most likely to become observable.

What is the purpose of Form #4400?

Form #4400 is intended to ensure every child in Georgia public schools is screened for spinal deformities. The earlier these problems are detected the earlier parents/guardians can seek professional help for their student.

What screenings are required?

The "Adams Forward Bend Test" is required, and the results must be documented on the Form #4400 before it is filed with the school. The Adams Forward Bend test is a simple painless observation of the child's back as he or she stands and bends over.

Who can conduct the screenings?

The test can be conducted by a physician with an active GA license or person working under the supervision of a physician with an active GA license, the local health department, and licensed school nurses.

What should a parent do if the "Needs further evaluation" box is checked?

If the "Needs further evaluation" box is checked, then the parent/guardian should take the student to a medical provider for a more detailed evaluation. Your physician or local health department may be able to help or recommend someone who can help.

What if a Form #4400 was previously filed for the child at another school?

Form #4400 should become part of the student's permanent record. If a student transfers schools, the school where the form was filed is required to forward Form #4400 to the new school.

What happens if Form #4400 is not completed for students in 6th and 8th grades?

Students without Form #4400 on file will be screened by school staff during a mass scoliosis screening event during the school year.