



Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner / Brian Kemp, Governor

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[dph.ga.gov](http://dph.ga.gov)

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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](http://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



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

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