# **Outpatient screening letter**

Ophthalmologist: Give this to the parent after the first outpatient exam. Place on your letterhead

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I examined the baby’s eyes today. This letter will explain why I needed to do the exam. It will also explain when I will need to examine the baby’s eyes again.

**Your baby may have a condition of the retina (the back of the eye) called ROP (retinopathy of prematurity).** After a premature birth, the blood vessels at the back of the eye may stop growing. The baby’s body responds by making a chemical called VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor). This chemical makes new blood vessels start growing.

But these are not normal blood vessels. These abnormal blood vessels can bleed. They can also pull (detach) the retina away from its normal position. This is called an RD (retinal detachment), and it can cause blindness. ROP needs to be treated with 72 hours when it reaches a certain stage. Your baby could go blind without treatment.

**The next few months are very important.** We need your help to keep your baby from going blind. I will need to examine the baby’s eyes many times. I will be checking for abnormal blood vessels. The exams must continue until the blood vessels heal.

You must bring the baby in to the office or clinic for every appointment. My office will contact you if you missan appointment. If we cannot reach you, we may need to contact Child Protective Services to help bring the baby in for an eye exam.

**Here is what I found today when I examined your baby**

\_\_\_\_Your baby’s blood vessels are abnormal. The baby may need treatment soon. I will examine the baby each week to see if treatment is needed. The next ROP exam is on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date) in \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.

\_\_\_\_Your baby’s blood vessels are abnormal. But the baby does not need treatment right now. I will examine the baby again to see if treatment is needed. The next ROP exam is on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date) in \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.

\_\_\_\_\_Your baby’s blood vessels are almost normal. The baby will not need treatment for ROP. But the baby needs a different type of eye exam. This exam will include a check for crossed eyes, lazy eye, or nearsightedness. We will examine your baby on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Name of ophthalmologist \_\_\_\_\_ Date