



What you should know

## Did you know that 80% of what kids learn in school is learned visually?



Good vision care is essential to every child's development. An eye exam can assure parents that their child has the visual "tools" necessary to succeed in the classroom.

Periodic comprehensive eye exams, beyond basic school screenings, provide a baseline for your child's visual health and can often detect problems that may be misdiagnosed as learning or behavioral disorders. Undiagnosed vision problems can affect performance in school and sports, and cause your child to struggle academically and socially.

Routine eye exams for children can also detect a number of vision problems, from vision impairment — which can be treated with eyeglasses or contact lenses — to more serious disorders that can have a long-term impact on health and self-esteem. Experts recommend a comprehensive eye exam by age one to rule out serious conditions such as amblyopia and strabismus (disorders where the eyes do not track properly, commonly called lazy eye and crossed eyes) and ocular cancers that become present early in life. Left untreated, these conditions can interfere with your child's vision development and overall health.

### Quick fact:

A school's or pediatrician's vision screening does not address all of the same issues that a comprehensive eye examination does.

Many eye conditions (like lazy eye, crossed eyes, nearsightedness and color vision defects) are inherited, so it is important for the doctor to know about family members who have had eye problems. Tell the doctor if the child has brothers or sisters, older or younger, and whether or not they have eye problems.

Tell the doctor all of your child's medical history, from the time the child was born. Prenatal and childbirth complications, prematurity and low birth weight have been linked to eye disease. Explain any medical problems, including allergies, the child has had or is experiencing now, and bring a list of current medications, as they can affect the visual system.

### Look for these potential signs of vision problems in your child:

- Loses place while reading
- Holds reading material closer than normal
- Avoids close work
- Tends to rub eyes
- Has headaches
- Turns or tilts head
- Makes frequent reversals when reading or writing
- Uses finger to maintain place when reading
- Omits or confuses small words when reading
- Consistently performs below potential
- Squints while reading or watching television

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Source: <http://www.aoa.org/childrens-vision.xml>

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