



# Quality Vision Care — Health Your Child Can See

## A Guide to Healthy Vision and Your Child

**G**ood vision care is essential to every child's development. Studies find that more than 80 percent of what children learn in school is learned visually<sup>1</sup>, so making sure your child has adequate vision care can make a big difference in their academic performance.

### An Important Part of Overall Health

Routine eye exams for children can detect a number of vision problems, from vision impairment — which can be treated with eyeglasses or contact lenses — to more serious disorders which can have long-term health and self-esteem impacts. 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 cross-eyed) and ocular cancers that present early in life. Left untreated, these conditions can interfere with your child's vision development and overall health.

Periodic comprehensive eye exams, beyond basic school screenings, provide a baseline for your child's visual health and can often detect problems that can 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.

### Making Eye Exams Comfortable and Fun

One of the best ways to teach your child about healthy vision and what to expect in a vision exam is to serve as a role model. Take your child with you when you have an eye exam and explain what will go on ahead of time. Make sure your child knows that during his or her exam he or she may be asked to look at and identify objects. For younger children, doctors often turn the exam into a game, having children identify pictures rather than reading eye charts. The doctor will also play color games with children to rule out color blindness. If your doctor plans to perform a dilated exam, you'll want to explain that the doctor may use eye drops to help to see the inside of the eyes better, but it will not hurt.

<sup>1</sup> [www.allaboutvision.com/parents](http://www.allaboutvision.com/parents)

## Making the Smooth Transition

If an eye exam determines that your child needs glasses, the next step is making sure your child wears them as instructed by the doctor. Here are some suggestions for helping your child adjust to wearing glasses regularly:



- **Talk with your child and ask what styles he or she likes best.** Are frames available in a favorite color? Let your child be the decision maker on which frames to purchase.
- **Ask how he or she feels about the new glasses.** Some children will be excited about new glasses, while others will be self-conscious. Focus on the ways better vision can improve your child's life, such as making sports, reading, drawing or playing video games easier. Does someone your child looks up to wear glasses? If so, point it out.
- **Ask if his or her glasses are comfortable.** Your child's frames should fit properly, without pinching the ears or nose, or weighing down the face. Check points of contact periodically to make sure there's no skin irritation. If your child complains of discomfort, let your provider know — most will gladly adjust the fit of your child's glasses at no charge.
- **Ask if he or she sees better with glasses.** If your child complains of headaches or itchy, burning or tired eyes after wearing glasses, you should consult your provider. An optician or eye doctor will be able to determine the optical accuracy of the prescription.
- **Have your child start by wearing his or her glasses for short periods of time,** and gradually increase the duration.
- **Make glasses part of your child's daily routine** — putting them on in the morning when dressing and taking them off at night before going to bed.

## OptumHealth Vision Is Here for You

Eyecare professionals know how to get the most out of your child's exam and are able to see things your pediatrician may overlook. OptumHealth Vision's national network offers great choices and conveniences with a diverse network of more than 30,000 providers, including both private practice and leading retail chain providers. Many of these providers pride themselves on comprehensive eye programs for children and carry a wide variety of children's frames.

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