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# Children's Health: Vision Care

Properly developed vision is vital to a child's growth and development. Use the following guidelines to help understand and care for your children's eyes.

## Infant Vision

- During the first four months of life, infants will follow moving objects with their eyes and attempt to reach for things.
- Between four and eight months, a baby should begin to turn from side to side, as well as use his or her arms and legs. At this time, eye movements and eye-body coordination skills begin to develop, and both eyes should focus more.
- At 8 to 12 months old, a baby should begin to use both eyes together and be able to judge distances.

A baby's eyes should be checked at birth and during well-baby doctor visits throughout his or her first year. All children should also undergo a complete eye exam at around 6 months old.

## Preschool-Age Vision

Between ages 3 and 6, children continue the process of fine-tuning their vision skills. Preschool children develop visually-guided eye, hand and body coordination; general motor skills; and the necessary visual motor skills to learn how to read and write. If no previous vision problem has been detected, your child should have a thorough eye exam by age 3 to ensure vision is

developing properly and to detect any developing eye diseases. If the child remains healthy, his or her next eye exam should be at age 5.

## School-Age Vision

Astigmatism, nearsightedness and farsightedness are the main vision concerns for school-age children. To detect and treat these problems, they should have their eyes checked around age 6 and every two years thereafter if no vision problems exist.

However, if a child requires glasses or contact lenses for refractive errors, he or she should receive a vision exam every year. The basic vision skills a child needs by school age include:

- Near and distance vision
- Eye movement skills
- Focusing skills
- Peripheral vision
- Hand-eye coordination

Parents should bring children in for a complete eye exam and should not rely solely on vision screenings done by a school nurse or pediatrician

## Spotting Eye Problems

Signs that a child may have vision problems include:

- Constant eye rubbing
  - Extreme light sensitivity
  - Poor focusing
  - Poor visual tracking (following an object)
  - Abnormal eye alignment or movement after 6 months of age
  - Chronic eye redness or tearing
  - A white pupil instead of black
- In school-age children, watch for other signs such as:
- Inability to see objects at a distance
  - Inability to read the blackboard
  - Squinting
  - Difficulty reading
  - Sitting too close to the TV

Source: [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)



## Did you know...?

The majority of eye injuries happen while children are playing with toys or sports equipment. Parents need to make sure toys and other equipment are safe for their children's eyes and should provide protective eyewear during certain activities.