

Your child's vision

Fact or fiction

Children cannot wear contact lenses

This is not true. Despite being a common myth some children are able to wear contact lenses safely. They are a great choice particularly for children who are very active.

If you cross your eyes, they will stay that way

This is not true. If you do notice your child has developed a crossed or turned eye, then they should have an eye examination.

Only boys are colour blind

Studies show about eight per cent of boys have some degree of colour vision deficiency but less than one per cent of girls do too.

Information

Why is vision so important?

Vision is considered the most important sense when it comes to learning. Your child needs many abilities to perform and succeed in life, and good vision is key as 80 per cent of a child's learning occurs through their eyes.

Which visual skills do children need?

As children progress they face a great variety of tasks, from seeing colours, reading from the board and from books, and using computers, all the time with greater demands on their eyes. Over the years, the size of print in school books becomes smaller and the workload increases, making it even more important for children to have clear, comfortable vision. If the eyes develop poorly, it may begin to affect their learning.



What happens in an eye examination?

Your optometrist will examine your child's eyes to make sure they are healthy and that vision is developing normally in both eyes. They have special tests they use for children and can make an eye examination fun. Most of all, congratulate yourself on giving your child the best chance to achieve good vision for life.

When is the right time for an eye examination?

Even if things seem to be going well, visiting your optometrist for a regular eye examination is a good idea. If for any reason you suspect an eye or vision problem, you should have your child's eyes examined.

Which symptoms will alert me to a problem?

Parents and teachers should watch for signs and symptoms of vision problems in children, such as:

- > Sitting unusually close to the television
- > Losing the place while reading
- > Holding books very close or avoiding reading
- > Tilting head to one side or closing one eye
- > Rubbing eyes
- > Headaches
- > Short attention span

While these signs and symptoms may not mean an eye or vision problem is present, an eye examination with your optometrist is a great place to start.

Will your child have to wear glasses?

After a full eye examination, your optometrist will tell you if your child requires prescription glasses. If they do it is usually due to short-sightedness, long-sightedness or astigmatism.

Eye exercises, known as vision therapy, can also help. Amblyopia - or lazy eye - is the lack of eye development causing poor vision and may be treated with prescription glasses. For children who are very active outdoors, contact lenses can be a great choice as well. The good news is that with treatment, nearly all children with an eye problem can achieve good vision.

Talk to your optometrist to help keep your children's eyes healthy with good vision for life.

Your optometrist