

# vision problems

Refractive errors (poor visual acuity or the presence of astigmatism) are eye doctors' main concern for school-age children. Parents, as well as teachers, should keep a watchful eye out for these 13 signals that a child's vision needs correction:

- Consistently sitting too close to the TV or holding a book too close
- Losing his place while reading
- Using a finger to follow along while reading
- Squinting
- Tilting the head to see better
- Frequent eye rubbing
- Sensitivity to light
- Excessive tearing
- Closing one eye to read, watch TV or see better
- Avoiding activities which require near vision, such as reading or homework, or distance vision, such as participating in sports or other recreational activities
- Complaining of headaches or tired eyes
- Avoiding using a computer, because it "hurts his eyes"
- Receiving lower grades than usual

Schedule an appointment with your eye doctor if your child exhibits the above signs. A visit with the doctor may reveal that your child is nearsighted, farsighted, or astigmatic. These three refractive errors are easily corrected with glasses or contact lenses.

THE CGH HEALTH FOUNDATION AND SEVERAL LOCAL EYE CARE PROVIDERS ARE COMMITTED TO HELPING MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE SIGHT AND LIVES OF CHILDREN IN THE SAUK VALLEY.

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HELPING KIDS  
SEE CLEARLY

# CHILDREN'S EYE EXAMS & GLASSES



helping kids  
see clearly



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# vision screening

AIMED AT DETECTING  
eye disorders of kids

Your child's vision is the most important tool he has to succeed in school. When his vision suffers, chances are his school work does, too. In fact, up to 25 percent of school children may have vision problems that can affect their ability to learn.

Routine eye care is important, because many abnormalities are treatable if discovered early, and untreated, can lead to vision loss and blindness. Your child's eye care should be a combination of screenings and eye exams. Screenings are performed between eye exams to find changes that need attention before a routine eye exam might be rescheduled.

An evaluation of your child's eyes should occur at all well child visits, even as an infant. At age three and a half, children should again be screened by a pediatrician or an eye doctor, with an emphasis on testing visual activity, such as by reading an eye chart of pictures or letters. An evaluation of eye alignment should be performed and vision should be rechecked by the age of five. Every other year subsequent routine vision exams should be done, and every year if problems are detected or if there is a family history of eye problems.

“ YOUR CHILD'S VISION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL HE HAS TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL. ”

# eye exams

FOR KIDS

Keep in mind that a vision screening performed by your pediatrician or the school nurse is not a complete eye exam. These screenings are designed to alert parents to the possibility of a visual problem, but not take the place of a visit to an eye doctor.

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT WHEN you take your child to the eye doctor?

An assessment of vision is the first step. Each eye will be checked separately. This is important because a child can function normally even if one eye is blind, provided that the other eye sees well. Before the child is able to cooperate with reading an eye chart, the fixation behavior of each eye on various toys or objects can be evaluated.

The doctor will also check that the eyes are aligned (i.e. that is there is no strabismus). Strabismus refers to the condition where two eyes do not point in the same direction, such as with crossed eyes.

The health of the front portion of the eyes and the back portion of the eye (retina) and reactions of the pupils to light will also be checked.

At the exam the eye doctor may dilate the pupils. One or two eye drops are placed in each eye and, after 20-30 minutes, the pupils are dilated and the muscles inside the eye are relaxed. Even in children unable to speak, the ability of the eye to focus normally can be assessed with the use of several highly accurate instruments. This will help determine if the child needs glasses. After the exam, the pupils will remain dilated for several hours. This may result in some mild blurring of near vision as well as sensitivity to sunlight.

# eye glasses

EYE GLASS PRESCRIPTIONS  
are given to children for a variety of reasons.

A common reason is to improve vision. Glasses accomplish this simply by focusing images clearly onto the retina in the back of the eyes.

**Myopia** or **nearsightedness**, which refers to difficulty seeing in the distance, is one of the most common conditions requiring glasses. Myopia typically appears around the age of nine or ten and in its early stages often does not need correction. The usual course, however, regardless of whether glasses are prescribed initially, is for the myopia to increase as the child grows. The onset and the final level of nearsightedness are hereditary to some degree.

**Astigmatism** refers to the eye being out of focus because the cornea or the front surface of the eye is not perfectly shaped.

**Hyperopia** or **farsightedness** is another condition which may require glasses. Whereas hyperopia in adults may cause blurring, some amount of hyperopia is actually a normal finding in children. Unless the amount of hyperopia is very high, children's eyes can focus clearly despite hyperopia. Therefore, glasses may not be necessary.

**Amblyopia** or a **“lazy eye”** is another reason glasses are prescribed. Amblyopia is a condition where the vision pathways between the eye and the brain do not develop fully because one or both eyes do not receive the proper visual stimulation.