

Teachers

As educators, we know that to help your students succeed you try to see the world through their eyes. Unfortunately, many students are not able to see clearly.

Teachers want success for all students, and even though you work with children every day, it can be hard to know which children are having difficulty seeing. There are often no physical signs, and the child has no point of reference for good eyesight. Children with vision problems may not complain that it is hard to see, because they do not know what normal vision is. They think the way they see is the way everyone sees – even if it's blurry. Unlike other chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes, which present as health emergencies, children with vision problems do not appear to be in distress, even when they are at risk of permanent vision loss or learning difficulties.

You are in a unique position to identify children with vision problems. Correcting these problems can improve a child's classroom, social and athletic performance.

- Children's vision is critical to their ability to learn, play, and develop social skills.
- One in four American children needs eyeglasses to see the blackboard or to read a book.
- Many children arrive at school without a vision screening or eye exam, or with a diagnosed vision problem but no eyeglasses. The eyeglasses may be broken, lost, or never purchased.
- Some vision conditions, if not treated, will lead to permanent vision loss. This means that early detection, diagnosis, follow-up, and treatment of a child's vision condition is critical.
- Children with developmental delay or other special needs are more likely to have vision problems.

Teachers are a valuable resource in helping to identify students with vision issues. Common complaints and behaviors such as itchy eyes, headaches, blinking, or squinting can be symptoms of a vision problem; it's critical that you alert the school nurse and the child's parents if you see signs and symptoms that indicate the need for a comprehensive eye exam. When you have a student who dislikes reading; feels challenged by classroom activities; seems uncoordinated; or has a hard time socially, please consider their vision. Issues that present as personality traits or learning problems could actually be caused by poor vision. Too often, children identified by the school nurse as needing follow-up care don't get it. You can help by communicating your concerns to the school nurse and reminding parents about the importance of eye exams and eyeglasses.

Help us accomplish our vision to assure that all children have the opportunity to develop their best possible vision.



Children's Vision
Massachusetts

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For more information: nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/Massachusetts