

Take your child to an eye doctor if you see one or more of these signs:



Children want to learn about their world. Healthy vision helps a child to play, touch, reach, recognize familiar faces, crawl, walk, understand and discover.

Blurry vision (and vision loss) may cause a child to struggle to do activities as easily as, or at the same age as, other children.

If your child is enrolled in Early Intervention or may receive Special Education services, it is especially important to know if your child is seeing with their best possible vision. A vision problem can slow their physical development or ability to learn.

How do your child's eyes look?

- One eye seems crossed, or wanders, or looks in, out, up, or down, especially when child is ill or tired.
- Droopy eyelid, covering part of the iris (the colored part of the eye).
- One eye looks different than the other.
- Eyes are crusty, red, watery, or swollen.

How does your child frequently act?

- Squints, frowns, rubs eyes or blinks very often.
- Avoids eye contact with you.
- Does not recognize familiar faces or objects.
- Extremely shy, quiet or clingy.
- Stares at bright lights.
- Difficulty with hand to eye movements, or picking up small objects, such as cereal.
- Holds objects close to face.
- Tilts head to one side, or covers or closes one eye, to look at something, such as a toy.
- Cannot stay still/attention wanders.
- Clumsy, bumps into things.
- Is not reaching age-appropriate developmental milestones (e.g., may not be reaching, crawling, walking).



What can I do if I think my child may not be seeing clearly?

1. Make an appointment with a pediatric ophthalmologist or pediatric optometrist who regularly treats babies and young children.
2. Find out the rules of your child's health insurance vision plan and coverage for glasses. These can differ from your adult vision plan.
3. Understand how your child's vision treatment (such as glasses, or use of an eye patch) should be used, before you leave the eye doctor's office.
4. Share the eye doctor report with your child's pediatrician, Early Intervention Specialist, and daycare/preschool.

5. Take Action: with any vision concern, or your child does not pass a vision screening, do not delay.

Annual eye exams for children are covered by Massachusetts health insurances, often at no cost.

Follow the eye doctor's treatment plan to ensure the best result for your child.

ONLINE LINKS:

Find an Eye Doctor in Massachusetts:

Children from Birth to 5 years old:

Resource Guide

www.childrensvisionmassachusetts.org

Children with Intellectual Disability:

www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/by-town.html

Full list of MA Optometrists:

www.maoptometry.org/find-a-doctor.html

Full list of MA Ophthalmologists:

<http://mseps.org/referral-directory-by-area-2/>

Financial Assistance for Vision-care:

www.preventblindness.org/vision-care-financial-assistance-information

Vision Development in Young Children:

<https://preventblindness.org/your-babys-developing-sight/>

<https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/childrens-vision-fact-sheets-posters-reports-and-publications/>

View a Child's Eye Exam:

<https://wisconsin.preventblindness.org/parent-resources>

MA STATE LAW:

An Act Relative to Eye Examinations for Children, 2004: Chapter 71, Section 57:

....Upon entering kindergarten or within 30 days of the start of the school year, the parent or guardian of each child shall present to school health personnel certification that the child within the previous 12 months has passed a vision screening...

For children who fail to pass the vision screening and for children diagnosed with neurodevelopmental delay*, proof of a comprehensive eye examination performed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist chosen by the child's parent or guardian indicating any pertinent diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, recommendation and evidence of follow-up treatment, if necessary, shall be provided....

*Diagnosed neurodevelopmental delay includes, but is not restricted to, children with:

- Hearing loss
- Motor abnormalities such as cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Cognitive delay
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Speech delay
- and others....



IS MY CHILD SEEING CLEARLY?

A young child cannot tell us how they see, and may not know or complain, if they find it difficult to see.



Guide for Parents of Children in Early Intervention

www.childrensvisionmassachusetts.org