

Children's Vision Massachusetts Story Bank



When I was a child (a long time ago) I had amblyopia. My condition was not found by a vision screening. My condition was obvious. You could easily see my crossed eye.

Knowing what I know now about vision and the importance of good vision, I feel lucky to have had a pronounced version of amblyopia. Why you might ask? My condition was readily identifiable, and my parents sought the treatment needed when I was 3 years old. I participated in weekly vision training sessions and wore glasses until I was 12 years old.

Consequently, my vision has been excellent since then, without the need for glasses.

I tell you this story for a reason. That reason is the importance of vision screening and doing it properly with the correct tools and techniques. My vision condition was easy to see. Most vision conditions are not easy to see. Vision screening will help find children whose vision problems are invisible.

Having worked in the vision industry for 40 years, one phrase that has stuck with me throughout is “a bad vision screening is worse than no vision screening at all”. If a child passes a vision screening with outdated equipment, improper training of the vision screener, or in a poor screening environment, then the vision screener thinks the child can see well. Worse, you have a child who thinks they can see correctly.



Children's Vision
Massachusetts

Open Eyes. Open Doors.

For more information: ChildrensVisionMassachusetts.org



For some reason, we all believe because we see someone's eyes and they look "normal", that person sees the way we see. This belief is far from the case when you realize that an estimated 1 in 17 young children, including up to 1 in 5 Head Start children, and an estimated 1 in 4 or 5 school-aged children have some form of vision issue.

Children have no frame of reference to know what they are supposed to see. We hear the stories from children who say, after receiving glasses for the first time, "I didn't know that trees have individual leaves or bark, they always looked like brown sticks with green blobs on top". That is when you begin to understand that not everyone sees what and how they should, or could, see, even if it appears they can.

Vision is so important in all aspects of life - from learning to interacting with others. So many lives can be changed with a well-executed vision screening program: identifying children who may have a problem with their vision, then making sure those kids receive, and stay in eye care.

Vision treatment in my childhood gave me a full life as an adult. Isn't it about time we made sure all children can see the best that they can?

Chris