

warning signs

Although many serious eye conditions don't have obvious symptoms – a thorough eye exam by an eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) is the *only* way to know for sure – a parent can be the first to detect early symptoms of some eye problems in a child. Warning signs include:

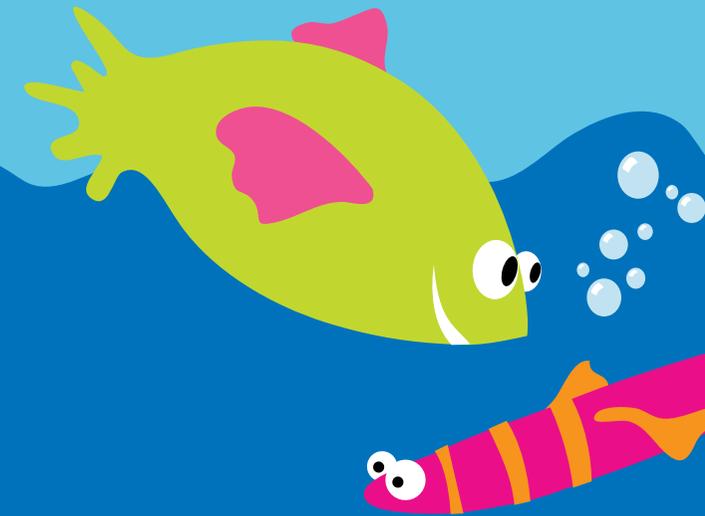
- sitting very close to the television
- holding objects too close
- avoiding puzzles, books, colouring or other near-distance work
- covering one eye when looking at something up close
- body rigidity while looking at distant objects
- lack of concentration
- visible frustration or grimacing
- excessive blinking or rubbing of the eyes
- tilting of the head or unusual posture
- lack of participation
- performing below potential
- complaining of headaches, blurred or double vision, or burning and itchy eyes
- marked inability to catch, build, balance or do other related eye-hand coordination activities
- hyperactivity or short attention span



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Your child's eye health

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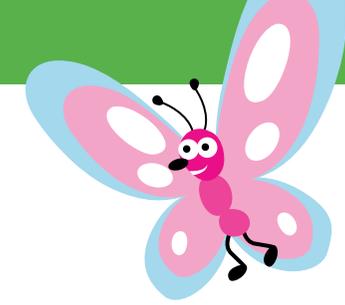
British Columbia
Association of
Optometrists

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Your child looks up to you. But how they *really* see you may be different than you think.

One in five children has a vision disorder. Not knowing any differently, many of these children accept poor vision and other eye ailments as normal. If left unchecked, serious long-term effects can result.



When it comes to your child's vision,

what could be more important?

I see. I learn.

More than 80 per cent of a child's learning is based on vision. If vision problems remain untreated, kids who are packed with potential are left lagging behind in learning. They may even become withdrawn or disruptive.

Not everyone makes the connection. Some children with poor eyesight are mistakenly labelled learning-disabled. In fact, one out of six children diagnosed with a learning disability actually has a correctable vision problem.

If detected, these conditions can be corrected by an eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist). Eye doctors often prescribe corrective lenses or vision therapy, enabling young children to rapidly catch up to their pals.

Eye exam essential

Taking your child to an eye doctor for a comprehensive eye exam is an important investment in your child's health. It's important children have their first eye exam between six and nine months, and at least one eye exam between the ages of two and five, and yearly after starting school.

An eye doctor can complete this test even if your child doesn't know how to read. An eye doctor can use shapes, animals and other child-friendly ways to evaluate vision and eye health.

Vision screenings offered by family doctors, for example, are limited in evaluating a child's overall eye health. Many serious eye conditions don't have obvious symptoms. A thorough eye exam by an eye doctor is the *only* way to know for sure.

Common vision conditions

Several different vision skills must work together for your child to see and understand clearly. If any of these vision skills are out of sync, your child's learning development can be greatly affected.

Nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism are the most common vision conditions among children. The treatment of lazy eye and crossed eyes in a child's early years is critical, as these conditions become more difficult – and sometimes impossible to correct as the child ages.

Poor visual performance is also common and largely escapes detection in general vision screenings. A complete eye exam is required to determine visual-performance problems, including: poor coordination of the eyes, turned eye, eye-movement defects, poor eye-hand coordination and difficulties controlling focus.

