

Ohio Student Eye Exam (OhioSEE) Program



VISION FACTS

What We Know About Children's Vision

How common are vision problems?

One in four children in the U.S. has an issue with their vision, according to the American Optometric Association (AOA, 2022) and Prevent Blindness (PB, 2020).

What are the most common vision problems?

Some common vision problems in children include refractive error (nearsightedness or farsightedness), strabismus (crossed eyes), and amblyopia (lazy eye). For more, see our "[Common Children's Vision Problems](#)" resource.

Why is it important to detect these problems early?

Many vision conditions, if not caught early, could cause amblyopia, also known as "lazy eye," leading to irreversible visual impairment. This can cause accidents and injuries, self-esteem and mental health issues, bullying, and academic difficulties (USPSTF, 2017). For more, see "[Vision and learning](#)" resource.

Prevent Blindness highlights that children with neurodevelopmental disorders (like autism and ADHD), those born premature, and children with readily recognized eye abnormalities (like ptosis and strabismus) are also at higher risk for vision problems (PB, 2024).

What warning signs should I look out for?

Warning signs of a vision problem include frequent eye rubbing or blinking, difficulty focusing or following objects, squinting, covering one eye, or tilting the head to see better, holding books or devices too close, and complaints of headaches, eye pain, or blurry vision. For more, see our "[Signs of a possible eye problem](#)" resource.



Department of
Health

What We Can Do About Children's Vision

How can vision screenings and eye exams help?

Vision screenings and eye exams are critical throughout childhood. Vision screenings can identify risk for vision problems while eye exams can detect issues like:

- **All ages:** Refractive error (blurry or unfocused vision).
- **Preschool:** Eye conditions that can lead to amblyopia and irreversible blindness.
- **Newborns, infants, and toddlers:** Rare eye cancers and other congenital abnormalities.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends a vision evaluation at birth and between 6-12 months, 12-36 months, and 3 to 5 years before attending screenings every one to two years for healthy school-aged children (Gudgel, 2020). The AOA endorses a similar timeline (AOA, 2017).

Do digital devices worsen my child's vision?

Prolonged screen time can cause eye strain, leading to:

- Dry eyes.
- Blurry vision.
- Headaches.

The AOA advocates for using the 20-20-20 rule to prevent this: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds (AOA, n.d.).

In addition to screenings and exams, is there anything else I can do to prevent vision problems from developing?

According to the CDC, these are some other things you can do to protect your child's vision (CDC, 2024):

- **Eat well:** Fruits and vegetables have vitamins and minerals that promote eye health.
- **Limit screen time:** Excessive screen time can make uncorrected vision problems worse.
- **Get enough sleep:** Sleep is critical to eye growth and recovery.
- **Spend time outdoors:** This can help prevent nearsightedness.
- **Use protective eyewear and sunglasses:** This can prevent eye injuries.

Are there any other resources that might be helpful?

- The [Ohio Amblyope Registry](#) (OAR) provides free patches, educational materials, and compliance materials to amblyopic children in Ohio.
- The [SUPERSPECS](#) Program provides free sports glasses for qualifying children.
- [Vision SODH: Data Highlight: Vision and Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\), Eye Health Monitoring System from the CDC](#).
- [Vision Advocacy: Early Detection of Vision Impairments in Children \(EDVI\) Act of 2024 from Prevent Blindness](#).
- [OhioSEE](#).

References

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