

Top 10 clues your child may need vision correction

Imagine learning only five letters of the alphabet, or three of the 12 basic colors. There's a reason we say "seeing is believing," and that is because seeing is learning.

As much as 80% of a child's learning is estimated to occur through his or her eyes.¹ So if a child finds it difficult to focus on pictures, words, or even the passing world outside the car window, his or her education is at risk. Why not wait until they can tell us they can't see? Because they likely don't realize it. Eyesight issues in children tend to emerge between 18 months and 4 years old.² So to them, what they see is normal.

This means it's up to us to detect the signs that kids need vision correction. If you want to know how to tell if your kid needs glasses, learn these 10 symptoms.

1

LOTS OF ZOOMING IN:

When children sit too close to the TV or computer, or hold mobile devices and books very close to their eyes, it may be a sign of **nearsightedness** – when things nearby are clear but become blurred at a distance. If a kid closes one eye while watching TV, it could be that the two eyes are not working together.³

2

HEAD TILTING:

Your child may just look inquisitive, but a regularly tilting head is a symptom of an eye disorder called strabismus, a muscle imbalance that prevents the eyes from moving in alignment. It could cause double vision, and head tilting helps minimize that.⁴

3

FINGER POINTING:

If your kid is a good reader but consistently uses her finger, it could be a **sign of amblyopia**, when words or letters crowd together. Finger pointing may also help keep her from losing her place, which may indicate astigmatism, a defect that can cause blurred vision.⁵

4

SLIPPING GRADES:

Our eyes deliver images to our brains, which is why they help us learn. So when a kid **has trouble seeing** things, it could lead to troubled grades. If a child's classroom performance drops, it could be from an inability to visually focus, to see far away or another condition.⁶

5

SLOPPY HANDWRITING:

The way a child writes can reveal much about her vision. If her letters are large, crooked or poorly spaced – or conversely if they are teeny-tiny – they may be spelling out a vision problem.⁷ This may also be the case if she writes neatly but quite slowly.⁸

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6

TRIPPING AND BUMPING:

Sure, not all kids are well coordinated, but persistent clumsiness – knocking things over, tripping and bumping into objects – may have more to do with the eyes than with having two left feet. It's better to **rule out vision problems** before another spill.

7

LIGHTHEADEDNESS:

When our two eyes do not align it can cause double vision, and the brain does not like that. It forces the eye muscles to compensate, which leads to muscle fatigue and, eventually, dizziness.⁹ Also, blurred vision or visual distortion also can cause dizziness.

8

HEAD OUCHES:

If a child's eye muscles have to work harder to put images into focus, eye fatigue or eyestrain will eventually set in. This may result in headaches, though the correlation is still being studied.¹⁰ If your child has frequent headaches along with other vision symptoms (such as light sensitivity), it's worth **calling the eye doctor**.

9

LIGHT FRIGHT:

Some eye conditions can cause kids to be especially sensitive to bright indoor lighting, camera flashes or sunlight. This is called photophobia. Children may experience headaches or nausea as a result.¹¹

10

RUBBING AND TEARING:

Just like a kid will rub a sore to make it hurt less, he'll rub his eyes to make them feel or **work better**. If he's rubbing eyes a lot while doing homework or playing sports, or has excessive tearing, it could be a vision problem.¹² It's best to call the eye doc.

¹"School-Aged Vision: 6 to 18 Years of Age, American Optometric Association, www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/good-vision-throughout-life/childrens-vision/school-aged-vision-6-to-18-years-of-age?sso=y

²"Signs of Vision Problems in Young Kids," WebMD, www.webmd.com/eye-health/features/child-eye-and-vision-problems#1

³"Signs of Children's Vision Problems," AllAboutVision.com, www.allaboutvision.com/parents/slideshow-warning-signs.htm

⁴"Top 10 Signs Your Child Needs Glasses," VeryWell www.verywell.com/top-signs-your-child-needs-vision-correction-3421600

⁵Ibid.

⁶"Is Reading Difficulty a Sign of Vision Problems?" Pediatric Eye Care of Maryland, www.dfeyes.com/vision-problems/reading-difficulty-sign-vision-problems/

⁷"What Your Child's Handwriting Could Reveal About Struggles with Reading," Dr. Philip Nicholson's Visual Learning Center, Jan. 14, 2016 www.visuallearningcenter.com/what-your-childs-handwriting-could-reveal-about-struggles-with-reading/

⁸"Handwriting Clues Reveal Need for Vision Therapy for Children," by Greg Mischio, The Vision Therapy Center Inc., Nov. 21, 2011, www.thevisiontherapycenter.com/discovering-vision-therapy/bid/71827/Handwriting-Clues-Reveal-Need-for-Vision-Therapy-for-Children

⁹"Eye Muscle Strain as the Cause of Dizziness and Headaches," Visual Specialists of Michigan, www.vision-specialists.com/binocular-vision-dysfunction-information/eye-muscle-strain-as-the-cause-of-dizziness-and-headaches

¹⁰"Children's Headaches Rarely Linked to Vision Problems," Aug. 1, 2014, American Academy of Ophthalmology, www.aoa.org/eye-health/news/study-of-vision-problems-headaches-in-children

¹¹"Signs of Children's Vision Problems," AllAboutVision.com, www.allaboutvision.com/parents/slideshow-warning-signs.htm

¹²"Signs of Children's Vision Problems," AllAboutVision.com, www.allaboutvision.com/parents/slideshow-warning-signs.htm