



PREMIER
EYE CARE

Avoiding Undiagnosed Childhood Vision Problems

Michael A. Hecht, O.D., Chief Medical Officer

Eye screenings are an important part of a child's visit to the pediatrician's office. Pediatricians know how to accurately check a child's vision, along with knowing when it's time to refer the patient to an eye care specialist.

Vision issues can sometimes go undiagnosed, however, so it is important for parents to understand the vision-related development milestones their child should be experiencing. Most children will not be aware that their eyes aren't working correctly, so parents, teachers and caregivers may be the first to notice.

With this in mind, here are some tips for parents to ensure that they catch any vision problems early:

Watch for development milestones: Parents should monitor their child's vision-related milestones and report any abnormalities to their pediatrician. Here are key milestones:

- Birth through 1 month:

An infant should be able to recognize objects from 8 to 12 inches away and differentiate high-contrast colors.

- 3 months through 4 months:

Babies should be able to hold their gaze on stationary objects, follow objects with their eyes and begin to reach for things.

- 5 months through 8 months:

Babies should begin to develop depth perception and eye-body coordination, see objects in three-dimensional views, and begin to grasp objects.

- 9 months through 12 months:

Babies should be able to judge distances and throw objects with precision.

- 1 year through 2 years:

Babies should have developed a level of hand-eye coordination that allows them to play games such as hide-and-seek and to play with hammer tools.

UNIQUE INSIGHT. BETTER SOLUTIONS.™

LOCATIONS IN Boca Raton, FL • Honolulu, HI



Get regular eye screenings: The [American Optometric Association](#) and [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#) recommend that a child have his or her first eye exam between 6 and 12 months. If the doctor doesn't detect any problems, the child should have another exam at 3 years old and another before starting school.

You can find a tutorial about effective school vision screening coauthored by the American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and the National Association of School Nurses at [www.aapos.org/ahp/resources for School nurses](http://www.aapos.org/ahp/resources_for_School_nurses).

Wear eye protection: UV protection is important from day one. Young children usually have larger pupils that will take in more UV rays, which can damage the eye. Strap-on sunglasses with UV protection are available for children who aren't ready for regular sunglasses.

As children grow older and begin participating in more physical activities, parents should be encouraged to have their children wear safety goggles to protect from injuries.

Be proactive: Teach children good vision habits from an early age, such as the 20-20 rule for screen time. For every 20 minutes spent in front of the TV, computer, or tablet, take a 20-second break to let your eyes relax.

Like other parts of your child's growing body, the eye needs nutrients to stay healthy. A daily multi-vitamin may improve your child's overall health, including his or her vision. Be sure to add lots of yellow, orange, and green leafy vegetables to your child's diet.

Work with your child's school: Children are often responsible for taking home the results of a vision screening that's been done at school, which can lead to the results being forgotten or buried in a backpack. Be aware of the testing dates and ask your child or the school nurse about the results.

Also, teachers can be a useful resource for detecting vision problems. Poor vision affects a child's ability to read the blackboard and learn the material and can negatively affect academic achievement.

Michael A. Hecht, O.D came to Premier Eye Care with nearly 15 years' experience working in optometry. He is now the Chief Medical Officer of Premier Eye Care. Premier is recognized by its partners as being the national leader in providing quality, innovative and affordable solutions for managed medical and routine eye care. More information about Premier is available at www.premiereyecare.net.

UNIQUE INSIGHT. BETTER SOLUTIONS.™

LOCATIONS IN Boca Raton, FL • Honolulu, HI