

Children's Health Tip of the Day

Oh, Say Can You See? Vision Problems May Affect Your Child's Learning

The world looks different through a child's eyes. But when the world looks unclear to your child, it is time for a comprehensive exam.

Undetected vision problems may interfere with learning

The Vision Council of America estimates that one in four children in the United States has an undetected vision problem that can interfere with learning. Research indicates that 70 percent of the 2 million school-age children who have difficulty in reading have some form of visual impairment. Since much of what a child learns is obtained visually, this can have a serious impact on school performance.

Guidelines for vision screening for children

The American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend a first eye exam by 6 months of age, again at the age of 3 or 4 with vision screening, and then every one to two years after that.

Comprehensive vision screening is needed to identify most problems

Eye experts warn parents not to rely on the simple vision screening commonly used by pediatricians and school nurses, as these only detect 5 percent of all vision problems. These screenings can offer early indications of problems relating to distance vision, but they often miss other critical vision problems that can impact eye health and a child's performance in school.

Signals that your child may have a vision problem

A regular comprehensive eye exam given by an eye care professional is considered the best method of diagnosing and treating vision problems. If, between exams, your child complains about having trouble seeing, or exhibits any of the following symptoms, consult an eye care specialist:

- Squinting
- Closing or covering one eye
- Holding a book close to the face
- Losing his place while reading
- Headache, nausea or dizziness
- Excessive clumsiness
- Tilting the head to one side
- Frequent daydreaming
- Using a finger as a place mark while reading
- Performing below potential
- Rubbing eyes repeatedly

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Date: April 2008