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It's Time To Go Back To School!



With summer winding down it's time to prepare for school. In midst of all the back-to-school shopping excitement don't forget about your child's most valuable school supply; their eyes. Eye exams for children are extremely important, because 5 to 10 percent of preschoolers and 25 percent of school-aged children have vision problems. Early identification of a child's vision problem can be crucial because children often are more responsive to treatment when problems are diagnosed early. According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), infants should have their first comprehensive at 6 months of age. Children then should have additional eye exams at age 3, and just before they enter the first grade — at about age 5 or 6. For school-aged children, the AOA recommends an eye exam every two years if no vision correction is required. Children who need eyeglasses or contact lenses should be examined annually or as recommended by their optometrist.

Early eye exams also are important because children need the following basic skills related to good eyesight for learning:

- ❖ Near vision
- ❖ Distance vision
- ❖ Binocular (two eyes) coordination
- ❖ Eye movement skills
- ❖ Focusing skills
- ❖ Peripheral awareness
- ❖ Hand-eye coordination

Eye doctors have specific equipment and training to assist them with spotting potential vision problems. When scheduling an eye exam for your child, choose a time when he or she usually is alert and happy.

Specifics of how eye exams are conducted depend on your child's age, but generally the exams will include a case history, vision testing, determination of whether eyeglasses are needed, testing of eye alignment, an eye health evaluation and, if needed, prescription of eyewear.

Be sure to tell your eye doctor if your child has or displays any of the following:

A history of prematurity

Delayed motor development

Frequent eye rubbing

Excessive blinking

Failure to maintain eye contact

Inability to maintain a gaze (fixation) while looking at objects

Poor eye tracking skills

Also, be sure to mention if your child has failed a vision screening at school or during a visit to his or her pediatrician.

Your eye doctor also will want to know about previous eye problems and treatments your child has had, such as surgeries and glasses or contact lens wear.

And be sure to inform your eye doctor about any family history of eye problems requiring vision correction, such as nearsightedness or farsightedness (refractive errors), lazy eye (strabismus/amblyopia) or eye diseases.



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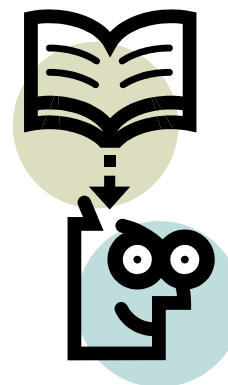
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