

# *Academy Health and Wellness*

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Vision screening is important for children. Eye exams can insure your child's eyes are healthy and have no vision problems that could interfere with school performance and potentially affect your child's safety.

While learning occurs through a number of complex and interrelated processes, vision plays a key role. Many signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with learning disabilities are similar to those caused by vision problems. Therefore, it is important that a comprehensive vision exam be part of the interdisciplinary evaluation of all children who are failing or having difficulty succeeding in school.

The *5 most common signs* a vision problem may be interfering with your child's ability to read and learn are: skips lines and rereads lines, poor reading comprehension, homework takes much longer than it should, reversing letters such as a "b" into a "d" and a short attention span when doing homework or schoolwork.

Due to the pandemic, the Department of Health has put its vision screening program on hold. Unfortunately, this initiative is part of the school's and community's screening safety net. Since screenings are not being conducted, families should take their children to their primary health provider for a vision screening or eye doctor for a comprehensive eye examination.

**Vision screening should be conducted as part of a regular well-child visit at the health care provider's office.** The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly encourages families to schedule and keep well-child checks throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Getting your child's eyes checked regularly is essential for spotting issues that are treatable when caught early. Children should be screened three times in the first year, again at 3 and 5 years, then every two years from ages 5 to 18. Premies or kids with a family history of childhood eye problems may need more frequent or more detailed exams.

Be sure to tell your optician if your child has any of the following: a history of prematurity, delayed motor development, frequent eye rubbing, excessive blinking, failure to maintain eye contact and poor eye tracking skills.

It is important to note that children may not know they are having problems seeing. Many believe that is how they are supposed to see. Please make those appointments. If you do not have eye exam coverage, please check out this website: <https://www.allaboutvision.com/eye-exam/free-exam.htm>

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