

What will the Optometrist do?

The optometrist will carry out an eye examination. A child's eye examination must be carried out slightly differently to an adult's, particularly if the child is not old enough to answer certain questions. Your optometrist is trained to carry out such an examination.

- Your child may sit on your knee during the examination.
- Praise and encourage your child.
- In order to get a more accurate eye examination the optometrist may put special drops into your child's eyes.
- A series of different tests will be carried out to evaluate your child's vision and eye health.
- An eye examination can be done at a pace to suit both you and your child.
- If you have any anxieties, discuss these with your Optometrist.



What happens if my child needs glasses?

If your child needs to get spectacles, the optometrist will discuss this with you. Sometimes as well as getting glasses, your child will need to learn special exercises to strengthen the muscles which work the eyes and control the vision. Your child may need to wear a patch over the good eye, in order to bring up the vision in the weaker eye.

It is important you are always positive about your child's eyesight. A negative reaction can have a deep impact on your child and affect his or her compliance with his or her management programme (wearing the glasses, doing special exercises, patching the eye). This will reduce the chances of a successful outcome for your child's vision.



How do I know what frames and lenses to pick?

The Optometrist or Dispensing Optician is trained to help you choose frames and discuss lens choices with you. Here are some tips to consider;

- Frames should fit well. They should be snug over the nose and secure behind the ears.
- The sides should have a spring joint.
- Materials such as titanium keep the frame light and strong. Titanium is also hypoallergenic.
- Choose a suitable frame shape so that your child is looking through the centre of the lens and not over the top of the frame.
- Choose special impact resistant lenses to improve safety and prevent breakages.
- Lenses can be thinned down to keep them light and improve the appearance of high prescriptions.
- You should always have a spare pair of glasses with an up to date prescription.
- Glasses should be kept in a safe hard case with a special cloth to keep the lenses clean.

What about contact lenses?

Children can wear contact lenses, but it is better to wait until they are used to the concept of wearing glasses before you consider this option. Your optometrist will advise you as to what type of contact lenses will suit your child.

Remember, your local Independent Optometrist is qualified, trained and experienced in dealing with children's vision. S/he will always give you the best advice and act in your child's best interest.



Association of
Optometrists Ireland

Association of Optometrists Ireland, Promoting Sight for Life
EyeZone Opticians, Ireland's Independent Eye Care Group



Ireland's High Quality Choice in Eye Care

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Healthy Living, Healthy Eyes

A guide to your child's eyecare



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Your Child's Eyesight

Your child's sight is his or her most precious sense. Yet how do you know if your child has a problem with their eyes or their vision? This leaflet is a guide to understanding more about your child's eye-sight and how it affects your child's development.

If your child has a problem with his/her eyes, the key to preventing problems is early detection. Children with vision or eye health problems can face barriers in life. Visual problems can affect their abilities in sport, school work and social development. High quality eye care and proper advice helps enable children with vision problems reach their highest potential. You as a parent must ensure that your child is getting the best eye care that is available.

5 to 10% of all pre-schoolers have problems with their eyes or vision. 25% of all children of school going age have vision problems. All primary schools carry out screening but often this is done when it is too late to help the child if a problem already exists. The earlier the problems are detected, the better the chances of success in treating the problem. Your local independent optometrist is trained to check your child's vision at all stages of development and pick up the early signs of any problems.

Why are visual skills necessary for school success?

When your child starts school they are using their eyes in a much more concentrated way compared to when they were babies, toddlers or even pre-schoolers. These are the skills a child uses every day as part of the learning process:

- Visual Acuity; Ability to see clearly at far distances.
- Focussing; Ability of the eyes to change quickly and smoothly to focus at different distances ex desk to teacher to blackboard to desk.
- Eye Tracking; Following a moving object (e.g. a ball).
- Eye Teaming; The ability to use and co-ordinate both eyes together in binocular vision.
- Hand Eye Co-ordination; Using the information sent to the brain from the eyes to direct the hands in performing activities (drawing or sport).
- Visual Perception: organising images on a printed page into letters, words and ideas which the child can understand and remember.



Any problem with a child's visual skills, will clearly interfere with their ability to develop their learning skills.



How would I know if my child has a problem with his/her vision?

If you observe any of these signs in your child it is advisable to book a full eye examination with your local independent optometrist:

- Complaining of not being able to see blackboard/tv/ball when playing or watching sport.
- The eye turning in or out.
- Holding things very close to the face.
- Frequent headaches.

However you should also look out for:

- Eye rubbing or blinking.
- Reduced attention span.
- Avoidance of reading or close work.
- Covering one eye when carrying out activities.
- Tilting the head to one side.
- Complaining of double vision.
- Repeatedly losing place when reading.
- Difficulty in retention of information which has been previously read.

There may not be a problem but remember, if there is, the earlier it is detected, the better.

