



Dr. Emily Schottman, Developmental Optometrist

2116 Hancock Drive, Austin, TX 78756

visiontrainersb@yahoo.com

Phone: (512) 419-1212 Fax: (512) 371-0164

INFANT AND TODDLER VISION

Dear Parent:

I am often asked, **"When should children get their eyes checked? My answer is: By 6 Months of Age!"** An evaluation should be sought sooner if you notice delays in development, if your infant has an eye that turns outward or inward (lasting more than a few seconds), or if you note excessive rubbing of the eyes. Early detection is critical in preventing and treating vision conditions that can affect your child's vision and success in school and life for many years to come.

The #1 symptom that your child has a visual problem is **NO symptoms at all!** We have special tests (lights, toys, lenses) that can determine what your child cannot tell you about their developing eyes.

It should be noted that pediatricians are only required to "attempt" 2 vision tests to detect gross delays. This can miss the subtle imbalances that can have a huge effect on development.

Our office is happy to help with an InfantSee Exam (free for children under 1 year of age) and ongoing Pediatric eye exams (annually starting at 3 years).

Hope to "see" you and your child soon! *Dr. Emily*

"The doctors at Stars In Your Eyes were so warm and welcoming to my family. They took the time to understand my concerns and offer real help, not just glasses or quick screening. Discovering what my child was seeing (and not seeing!) gave me great peace of mind."

Happy Stars In Your Eyes Parent

Preschool Vision Development Checklist

Your child's visual readiness for school starts developing on the day of birth. Every day is a chance for your child to learn to use their vision more efficiently. This checklist may help you detect obstacles to good vision development, which your child cannot communicate.

Appearance of Eyes

- Redness of eyes or lids
- Abnormal pupil appearance(1)
- Crusted eyelids
- Styes, or sores, on lids
- Excessive tearing
- Unusual lid droopiness
- Frequently closing eyes
- Eye turns in or out (even a little)

Evidence of Discomfort

- Excessive rubbing of eyes
- Excessive blinking
- Avoids bright light
- Closes one/ both eyes often.
- Head tilt/turn
- Facial/body tension when looking at objects.

Other Common Symptoms

- Poor Eye Contact
- Delayed motor development
- Poor attention, daydreaming, "zoned" out
- Bumping into others, objects, etc.
- Poor coordination or depth perception
- Rapid eye movements

Notes:

- The longer your child's problem is present the longer and harder it is to treat.
- Do not hesitate to get several opinions before anything as radical as eye muscle surgery is recommended for your child at these early ages. There are several proven clinical procedures to alleviate most of these problems, and surgery should always be the last resort.

(1)"White" in either the black center circle of the eye (or in red-eye photos) or different pupil sizes can be A MEDICAL EMERGENCY and requires immediate evaluation!

Did You Know?

- Your child's vision is not fully developed at birth and needs to be learned and encouraged. Many visual skills can be trained and enhanced with home activities.
- Vision problems are the #1 handicapping disability in children.
- If your child has a history of prematurity, high fevers, ear infections, allergies or developmental delays, there is a greater risk of poor vision.
- Most infants and toddlers are usually farsighted. They become less so when they learn to look, touch and explore their worlds. They are not destined to have the same vision as their parents with the right interventions.

Sources for Additional Information

College of Optometrists in Vision Development

www.covd.org

Optometric Extension Program

www.oep.org

Parents Active for Vision Education

www.pavevision.org

INFANTSEE Program

www.infantsee.org

What Does Our Functional Vision Evaluation Include?

- Developmental Patient History
- Visual Acuity Assessment
- Refractive Analysis (farsightedness, nearsightedness and astigmatism)
- Visual Motor Development
- Eye Movements
- Eye Focusing
- Eye Teaming
- Eye-Hand Integration
- Assessment of Eye Health

Resulting Recommendations May Include:

- Visual Guidance Activities
- Developmental Vision Therapy
- Prescribing of Lenses for Development
- Referrals for Further Assessment and/or Treatment by Other Disciplines.

"When vision is working well, it guides and leads. When not, it interferes."

Dr. John Streff

How to Help Your Child See Better

- **Anytime:** Talk and interact at every opportunity. This provides time for learning, communication and eye contact. Make sure infants have "tummy time" each day. This helps to develop neck and back muscles, which lead to the proper development of their visual systems.
- **1 Month:** Hold and feed infants from alternating sides. This encourages adequate visual development of both eyes. Place infants in their crib facing different directions as well as change the location of the crib so they can see the world from many different viewpoints.
- **2 Months:** Allow infants to explore with their hands. This provides many different stimuli including texture, size, weight and form. These experiences provide them with a foundation upon which they build their knowledge.
- **4 Months:** Allow infants to help hold their bottle and have clean, smooth objects available so they can explore with their mouth. This allows the infant to reinforce learning through the different senses.
- **6 Months:** Play peek-a-boo to develop memory and recall. Tie bells on their booties so they can learn about their body through sound and movement patterns.

Why Should You Seek Help From a Developmental Optometrist?

Members of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, an organization of optometrists with special interests in infant visual development and the guidance of visual conditions found in infants, are trained to use the latest technology and techniques to provide a thorough examination of your child even if they can't communicate or you think they might be uncooperative.

If you have friends or relatives who need a referral outside our area, we would be glad to help you get in touch with one of our colleagues.