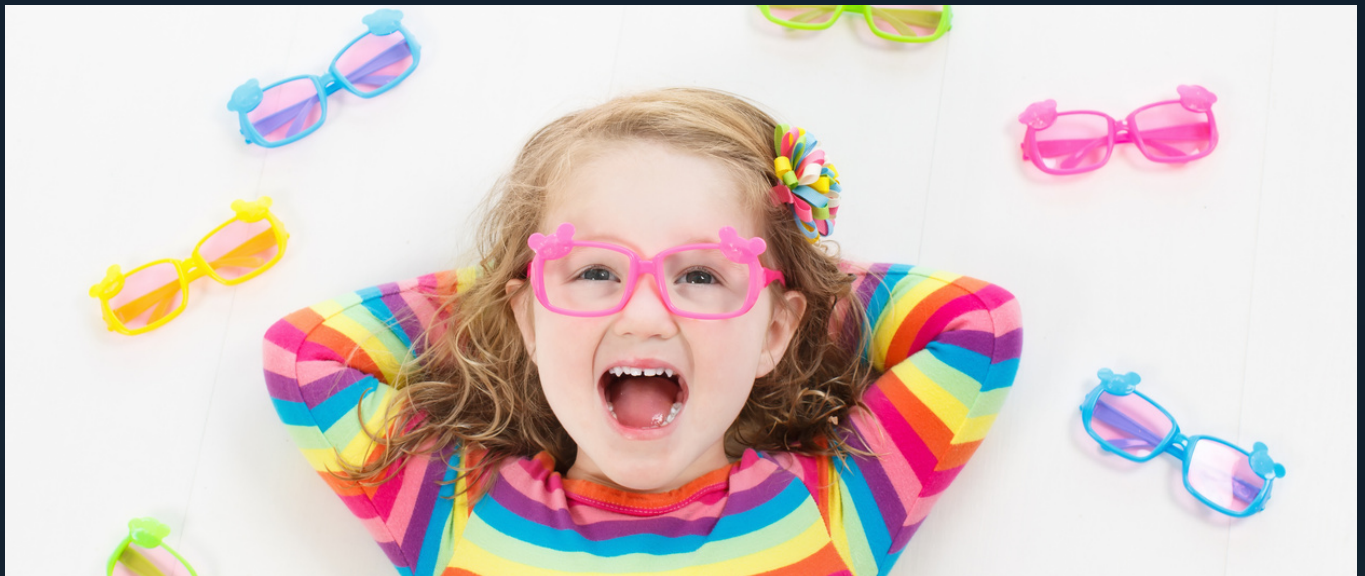


NEWSLETTER



Seeing to Your Child's Vision Care

As a good parent, you want to do your best to ensure the health, safety, and happiness of your child. Staying up to date on routine medical and dental checkups is fundamental to a child's overall well being. This is also true for vision care. Periodic eye exams are essential to determine if your child's vision is developing on schedule and for the detection of any emerging issues that may require treatment.

According to the American Optometric Association, approximately one in four children are affected by a vision disorder. While uncorrected refractive errors such as nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism are common reasons for vision impairment in children, there are many other eye conditions and diseases that can affect their sight.



The health of your child's vision plays an important role in his or her physical, cognitive and social development. As vision is the most dominant of the five senses, much of what is experienced in the world is related to one's ability to see. Since any significant or untreated vision impairment can limit a person's capacity to interact with their surroundings, having eyesight that is compromised can have far reaching consequences. For children, uncorrected vision problems may be associated with developmental delays, as well as academic and behavior issues. Certain untreated childhood eye disorders can even lead to permanent vision loss.



It is important to keep in mind that it is not unusual for a young child with impaired eyesight to be unaware that the vision they are experiencing is deficient in any way. Parents should take note and consult an eye doctor if their child is squinting, holding books very closely, frequently rubbing the eyes, sitting right in front of the TV, having trouble with eye- hand coordination, as well as encountering difficulties in school or during certain activities.

The good news is that with early detection and appropriate care, many childhood eye conditions can be effectively treated or corrected. This is why the American Optometric Association recommends that infants and children have comprehensive eye exams at 6 months, 3 years of age, and at the start of school, before kindergarten, and then once every two years. However, in the presence of certain risk factors or diagnosed vision issues, more frequent exams may be recommended. Furthermore, children who are wearing eyeglasses or contact lenses should be checked annually.

At your child's comprehensive vision examination your eye doctor will perform a child friendly and age appropriate assessment of his or her visual acuity, eye tracking, and focusing skills, as well as check for problems such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, lazy eye (amblyopia), crossed eyes, dyslexia, color blindness, and any diseases, injuries or medical conditions that can affect the eyes. Depending upon the findings of your child's eye exam visit, eyeglasses, vision therapy or additional procedures may be prescribed.

Scheduling your child for the recommended comprehensive examinations is the most important step you can take to safeguard eye health and to help your little one get off to a good start in school and at play.

