

# Kids Welcome Here<sup>®</sup>



## Children's Vision 1-3-5<sup>®</sup>

- When should your child have an eye exam?
- What vision problems might your child have?
- Why do vision problems need to be detected early?

# What is Children's Vision 1-3-5<sup>®</sup>



Children's Vision 1-3-5 reminds parents when their young children need to have an eye examination from their optometrist: **BEFORE AGE 1**, at **AGE 3** and at **AGE 5** before entering school. The earlier a child's vision problems are detected, the more responsive the visual system will be to treatment, and you will be ensuring your child has the best possible vision skills to learn.

## The exam before age 1

The American Optometric Association, Pennsylvania Optometric Association and American Public Health Association recommend that children should have their first eye examination by an optometrist at 6 to 12 months of age. Why? Because your optometrist will examine the eyes for disease and normal eye structure development. Infants will be checked for possible signs of amblyopia (lazy eye), crossed-eyes and other focusing problems. Early detection is often critical in preventing vision problems that can have lifelong effects.

## The exam at age 3

At age 3, your child's visual acuity and eye health will be assessed. Eye movement skills, focusing and binocular vision skills (the ability of the two eyes to work together as a team) will be evaluated. The eyes will again be checked for warning signs of amblyopia, which is most responsive to treatment if diagnosed by the age of 3.

## The exam at age 5

At age 5, your child should be examined to determine the readiness of vision skills for school. An estimated 15% of children have

a significant need for eyeglasses to treat nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism. Approximately 15-20% suffer from poor vision skills – focusing, eye alignment or other eye movement skills. Sending a child to school with undetected vision problems can lead to difficulty with learning and frustration in school.

## Do children's school vision screenings substitute for a comprehensive vision examination by an optometrist?

No. The purpose of a school vision screening is to detect gross visual problems and determine if there is an immediate need for a comprehensive vision examination. All children should have regular comprehensive vision exams. Good vision is more than just 20/20 sight. Efficient vision requires a number of critical visual skills. Some of these skills are eye teaming, clear and sustained near vision, tracking, focusing and accurate eye-hand coordination. Recognizing the shortcomings of vision screenings, the National PTA passed a resolution that educates its members, school personnel and the public at large about learning-related visual problems, and recommends expanded school vision screenings to identify more at-risk kids.

## Frequency of children's vision exams

The American Optometric Association and Pennsylvania Optometric Association recommend the following guidelines for the frequency of children's vision exams:

- **Age 6 to 12 months**
- **Age 3 years**
- **Before entering school**
- **Every two years thereafter**

*Your optometrist will recommend an appropriate schedule for at-risk kids.*



# What is the **Welcome Here**<sup>®</sup> Campaign?

The Kids Welcome Here campaign is a commitment by doctors of optometry who are members of the Pennsylvania Optometric Association to ensure that your children have the best possible vision and vision skills to use in their educational years and future lives. Our goal is to increase public awareness that infants and children deserve to have regular comprehensive vision examinations.

## What is an optometrist?

Optometrists are state-licensed health care professionals who diagnose and treat eye health and vision problems. They prescribe glasses, contact lenses and medications, and provide low vision rehabilitation and vision therapy services. They hold a doctor of optometry (O.D.) degree.

Optometrists are trained in the latest technology and techniques to provide a thorough eye health and vision examination of your child even if the child has yet to develop communication skills, cooperates poorly during the exam or is unable to read an eye chart. Your primary care optometrist is proud to be able to help your children achieve their best in life.

### **Protect your child's ability to learn.**

Find a list of Pennsylvania Children's Vision Care Alliance optometrists at [www.poaeyes.org](http://www.poaeyes.org).

Sponsored by



Pennsylvania Optometric Association · 218 North Street · Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 233-6455 · [mail@poaeyes.org](mailto:mail@poaeyes.org) · [www.poaeyes.org](http://www.poaeyes.org)

KIDS WELCOME HERE and CHILDREN'S VISION 1-3-5 are Registered Marks of the Pennsylvania Optometric Association.  
© Pennsylvania Optometric Association 2001