

THINK OF VISION

A Guide for Preschool Teachers

A young child does not know how they should see and cannot tell us about their vision. One or two children in every preschool classroom will have a vision disorder that, left unidentified and untreated, could interfere with their development and acquisition of early literacy skills. As a preschool teacher, you can support the vision of the children you teach.

If you repeatedly observe a preschooler exhibiting one or several of these signs, **THINK OF VISION**. Ask the parent, school nurse, or health manager for the child to receive a vision screening or comprehensive eye exam from an eye doctor:

APPEARANCE:

- Eyes are crusty, red, watery, inflamed or don't line up
- Eye turn, wandering eye, droopy eyelid

BEHAVIORS:

- Squints, frowns, rubs eyes or blinks frequently
- Body rigid, or thrusts head forward or backward when looking at distant objects
- Avoidance of eye contact
- Extreme shyness, poor social interaction
- Easily distractible/unable to focus or maintain attention
- Avoids playing outside or joining in games
- Difficulty coordinating hand/eye movements (e.g. picking up objects)
- Clumsy, bumps into things

WHEN READING, WRITING OR DOING CLOSE-UP WORK:

- Poor letter or word recognition
- Difficulty completing a letter or symbol
- Rereads, skips lines, or loses place often
- Closes one eye when doing near work
- Tilts or turns head, or lays head on desk
- Falls asleep while reading
- Loses interest quickly
- Seems cranky when doing near tasks
- Holds books or objects close to face

ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS:

A comprehensive eye exam from an eye doctor should be part of the evaluation process if a child:

- Is enrolled in Early Intervention
- Is enrolled in a Special Education program
- Will receive an I.E.P. in school
- Has developmental delays



Most childhood vision disorders are treated by wearing prescription eyeglasses. To allow a preschooler the opportunity to enjoy play and learning, gain skills, and reach their fullest potential, the child needs to follow the eye doctor's treatment plan.

Teachers can help by understanding how the child's prescribed treatment should be applied in the classroom, and reinforcing and encouraging children and parents with adherence.

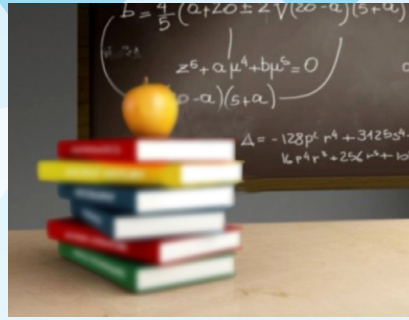
Visit childrensvisionmassachusetts.org for more information.



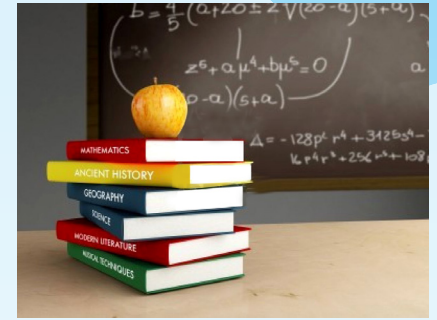
How a child sees with:

Impaired Vision

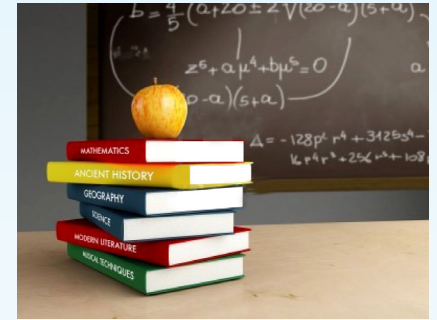
Hyperopia (blur at near)



Healthy Vision



Myopia (blur at far)



Astigmatism (blur at any distance)



Amblyopia (brain selects vision from better-seeing eye)



Strabismus (eyes do not align)

