

The Vision & Learning Connection



Why should a child entering school have a vision exam? A significant part of learning is done visually. Undetected and untreated vision conditions can act as barriers to learning and healthy childhood development. When a child is visually ready to learn, that child will be able to succeed, not just in the classroom, but in life. Reading, spelling, writing, whiteboard work and computer work are among the tasks students tackle all day long, day after day. Each requires the ability to see and understand visual information which is frequently less than arm's length from the eyes. Vision is more than just clarity. It is the ability to visualize, understand and apply the information that comes through the eyes. A comprehensive eye exam can assess the visual skills necessary to classroom learning. Seven visual skills necessary for the classroom are outlined below.

Seven Visual Abilities for Learning

1. **Visual Acuity:** *Ability to see clearly at distance or near.*
2. **Accommodation:** *Ability to maintain clear vision as objects are moved closer.*
3. **Eye Teaming:** *Ability to coordinate the two eyes together so that they both point at precisely the same object.*
4. **Eye Movement:** *Ability to "track" objects or views without discomfort or difficulty.*
5. **Visual Perception:** *Ability to correctly interpret what is visually "received" as well as being able to react to what is seen.*
6. **Eye-Hand Coordination:** *Ability to use the eyes to guide the hands.*
7. **Visual Imagery:** *Ability to "see pictures in the mind." There are two categories: 1) Visual memory is the ability to retrieve or remember a picture of what has been seen in the past and 2) Visualization is the ability to form new pictures in your mind.*

How Thoroughly Has Your Child Been Tested?

Vision Screenings typically only evaluate whether a child can see an eye chart from a distance or has an obvious eye health issue. Most vision screenings only address acuity.

School Vision Evaluations are required by law for students entering school. The law requires testing for lazy eye, misalignment of the eyes, and internal and external eye health as well as acuity. These evaluations must be performed by an optometrist (OD), physician (MD), a physician assistant (PA), or an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN).

Vision Examinations are typically performed by eye doctors. They include a series of tests and observations that assess the health of the eye as well as a broad range of visual functions. These are the most comprehensive evaluations of a child's visual capability for learning.

For information on the availability of vision evaluation resources for low-income families, please contact your school or the Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision.

Visit www.nechildrensvision.org for more on children's vision.



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