

# HOW TO SCHEDULE AN EYE EXAMINATION



## Step 1: Find an Eye Doctor

An eye doctor examines your child's eyes to find out if your child has a vision problem that requires treatment now (such as eyeglasses or patching) or follow-up visits to see if treatment is needed in the future. An eye doctor can be an ophthalmologist, pediatric ophthalmologist, optometrist, or pediatric optometrist. Depending on the type of eye or vision problem your child may have, the age of your child, other health conditions, who is available to examine your child's eyes and vision, and the type of insurance you have, one type of eye doctor may be better to visit than another.

### To find an ophthalmologist:

<https://secure.aao.org/aao/find-ophthalmologist>

### To find a pediatric ophthalmologist:

<https://secure.aapos.org/aapos/Find-a-Doctor>

### To find an optometrist:

<https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/find-a-doctor?sso=y>

### To find a pediatric optometrist:

<https://www.aaopt.org/fellows-search>

## Step 2: Make the Eye Examination Appointment

1. Call your insurance company and ask if your insurance plan will cover the eye examination and the doctor you want to see.
  - a. Ask if your insurance company has rules about making eye appointments on certain days and times.
  - b. Routine eye exams and glasses are often covered by vision insurance.
  - a. Medical concerns about your child's eyes are often covered by health insurance.
2. When you call to make an appointment, be ready to explain all eye or vision problems your child is having.
  - a. For example, you could say are calling to make an eye exam appointment because your child did not pass a vision screening.
  - b. You may want the eye doctor to look at vision concerns from this link: **Signs of Possible Vision Problems in Children** or **Parent Educational Checklist**.
3. If your child has a disability, ask if the eye doctor has experience working with children with disabilities, especially sensory issues, and your child's particular disability.
  - a. If the eye doctor does not have experience, ask if the office you called can recommend another eye doctor to call.
6. Try to get an appointment when your child is not likely to be sleepy or hungry.
7. After you make the appointment, write the doctor's name, date, and time of the examination on a piece of paper and place the paper on your refrigerator or add a reminder in your paper or mobile phone calendar to help you remember the appointment.

## Questions you might ask during the eye examination if your child has an eye or vision problem and needs treatment<sup>1</sup>

- What is my child's eye or vision problem?
- What caused the eye or vision problem?
- Will it get better or worse?
- Will my child need eyeglasses?
- What are the treatment options?
- Can you tell me how much my child can see?
- Will the eye or vision problem limit my child's activities?
- Can my other children have this same eye or vision problem?
- When should I return for the next exam?
- When is the best time to call if I have more questions?
- What else do I need to know?
- Ask at a follow-up eye examination appointment: Are there any changes since the last exam? Better or worse vision?

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from the American Printing House for the Blind – [www.familyconnect.org/info/after-the-diagnosis/working-with-medical-professionals/questions-to-ask/135](http://www.familyconnect.org/info/after-the-diagnosis/working-with-medical-professionals/questions-to-ask/135)

8. If you run into problems making an appointment or are concerned about costs of the eye exam or treatment, talk to your child's primary health care provider, Head Start staff person, or school nurse.
9. If you have a disability and need assistance with making the eye appointment or need someone to go with you to the eye exam, talk to your Head Start program staff or school nurse.
10. If you need a translator at the eye examination visit, ask if the eye doctor has a translator. You may need to bring a translator with you to the visit.

### Step 3: Examination day! Prepare for the Visit

1. Watch a video of a visit to an eye doctor so you know what to expect during the eye examination.
  - a. **What to Expect at the Pediatric Ophthalmologist**
  - b. **Your Child's Eye Exam Dr. Tracey Strombeck – Video from Prevent Blindness Wisconsin**
2. Have a plan ready in case you need to spend a long time in the waiting room. For example, bring a favorite storybook, coloring book and 1 or 2 crayons, a small toy or cuddly stuffed animal your child can play with quietly, and a healthy snack if your child gets hungry.
3. If your child has a disability, bring papers about your child's disability to give to the eye doctor.
  - a. If your child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or a 504 Plan, ask the eye doctor if vision information should be added to these plans.
2. Write the questions you want to ask your child's eye doctor (find question examples in the yellow box on the 1st page of this fact sheet).
3. When you are in the exam room, you may want to ask the eye doctor to let your child watch a family member get an eye exam. Or the eye doctor could examine your child's stuffed animal. This will depend on your child's age. Ask the eye doctor to tell your child what is going on during the exam. Encourage your child to ask questions about what the eye doctor is doing.

### Vision Care Financial Assistance

#### Medicaid

Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
 7500 Security Boulevard  
 Baltimore, MD 21244  
 Phone : (877) 267-2323 | [www.medicaid.gov](http://www.medicaid.gov)

The best place to start is the Medicaid office of your particular state. You can also find information and assistance at the Medicaid.gov website and the individual state Medicaid websites (Go to the menu and select "State Overviews").

#### OneSight's OnSite Voucher Program

Phone: (888) 935-4589 | [www.onesight.org](http://www.onesight.org)  
 Through OneSight's OnSite Voucher Program, eligible patients can receive glasses free of charge. For information on this program, contact Prevent Blindness: <https://preventblindness.org/vision-care-financial-assistance-information/>

#### Sight for Students, a Vision Service Plan (VSP)

Phone: (800) 877-7195 | [www.sightforstudents.org](http://www.sightforstudents.org)  
 VSP provides free eye care service to eligible students (18 years or younger) whose families' income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Services include an eye exam from one of VSP's participating doctors and glasses –if prescribed.

#### Additional Assistance Programs

For additional information, visit Your Sight: Vision Care Financial Assistance Information at Prevent Blindness (downloads available in English and Spanish): <https://preventblindness.org/vision-care-financial-assistance-information/>



"Small Steps for Big Vision" is an initiative of the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness ([www.nationalcenter.preventblindness.org](http://www.nationalcenter.preventblindness.org)). For more information, contact: [info@preventblindness.org](mailto:info@preventblindness.org)

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