

Children's Vision



Ensuring that your child has a clear view of the world is an essential part of caring for their health

As parents we love our children and take our parenting responsibilities seriously. Looking after the physical and emotional health of our children is our top priority. That means a healthy diet, exercise, lots of love and regular visits to the doctor when needed. With such good intent it's surprising to know that there's one aspect of our child's health that is so often overlooked.... their vision.

Eye health and the development of normal vision, is a frequently neglected aspect of wellbeing, usually receiving attention only when our picture of the world becomes a blur! In truth there are a number of relatively "silent" vision problems which can effect our children without us even realising there is a problem. That is why it is so important to see your Carlisle Mason Optometrist for a thorough vision assessment when your child turns three, and then again shortly before starting school, with two yearly visits thereafter.

Pre-schoolers spend most of their waking hours looking at whatever is at the end of their arm, whether it's a puzzle, building blocks or a soft toy. Starting school at the age of five means they are suddenly immersed in a world of structure which may require them to maintain the near vision required for reading and writing, for several hours a day. This is a significant change to the way they use their eyes, and vision problems can arise as a result.

It is not too difficult to tell when your child is having problems with distance viewing. Tell tale signs include: sitting too close to the television or complaining that they cant see the blackboard clearly in the classroom. Detecting problems with close vision can be much more challenging but common symptoms to look out for are squinting, frequent blinking and rubbing the eyes. Avoidance of close vision tasks is also a sign of potential problems.

Monthly Vision Health Bulletin

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Close vision tasks such as reading require much more than just clear eyesight. To read easily and effectively your child needs a variety of scanning, focusing and visual coordination skills. Detecting a problem with any of these visual processing tasks requires the specialist skills of an optometrist.

"Children with uncorrected vision problems can struggle to develop academically, socially and athletically. Over 80% of our learning is visual. So if the visual system is not working correctly our learning is affected."

Sort out your Children's vision problems early with Auckland Children's Optometrists Carlisle Mason. Expert eyecare can eliminate the struggle and ensure your child achieves their potential in life."

How you see, How you look.



Children's Vision

Carlisle Mason Optometrists Phone 0800 678 478 www.carlisle-mason.co.nz

Routine vision testing at school is a very basic screening test which assesses colour vision, eye alignment and distance vision. This brief test does not look at your child's eye health, near visual performance; how much effort is required to perform close vision tasks and how well the eyes work together.

New Zealand study shows shocking prevalence of vision problems

Problems with close vision may predispose your child to learning difficulties, which in turn can contribute to self esteem and behavioural issues resulting from feelings of inadequacy in the classroom. A large New Zealand study found that undiagnosed and untreated vision problems are contributing to reading failure for many school children. As many as 70% of high school children with reading problems were found to have undiagnosed vision problems. In fact, in one Rotorua high school 24% of all the children in year nine were adversely effected by vision problems. When you consider that 80% of our learning is visual, it's easy to see how disruptive vision problems can be for school aged children.

Behavioural issues and ADHD diagnoses are a challenge for far too many New Zealand children. Undiagnosed vision problems can contribute to such issues. If your child has had a school screening eye test and been pronounced "healthy", and yet they are struggling with learning disability, dyslexia type issues or behavioural problems, it is vital that they are examined by an optometrist for more complex vision problems which may be contributing to their difficulties.

Behavioural Optometrists are childhood vision specialists

Some optometrists are trained in this specialist area, and are called Behavioural or Developmental Optometrists. Having diagnosed a vision problem, the Behavioural Optometrist puts together an individually tailored program of vision therapy. It's a bit like a gym workout for the eyes!

Sometimes a lazy or wandering eye means that a child's brain only learns to operate one eye at a time, therefore depth perception is poor and balance and coordination problems are an issue. A Developmental Optometrist can often remedy these problems without surgery. Unlike the past, a lazy eye may be able to be remedied at any age through a combination of patching (covering the other eye with an eye patch to make the lazy eye work), glasses and vision therapy.

For further information about children's vision speak with your friendly Carlisle Mason Optometrist or go to www.carlisle-mason.co.nz

To make an appointment with our Carlisle Mason Behavioural Optometrist contact:

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There are some signs which may indicate your child is experiencing vision problems:

- sitting too close to the television or holding a book close to the face.
- losing their place frequently when reading
- * following text with their finger while reading
- squinting
- tilting the head to see clearly
- frequent eye rubbing and light sensitivity
- complaining frequently of headaches and tired eyes
- poor performance in the classroom
- resistance to going to school or doing homework

If your child is exhibiting any of these behaviours make an appointment to see your Carlisle Mason Optometrist for an evaluation.

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