



Warning Signs of Vision Problems in Infants & Children

Eye exams by your child's doctor are an important way to identify problems with your child's vision. Problems that are found early have a better chance of being treated successfully.

What are warning signs of a vision problem?

Babies up to 1 year of age:

- **Babies older than 3 months** should be able to follow or track an object, like a toy or ball, with their eyes as it moves across their field of vision. If your baby can't make steady eye contact by this time or seems unable to see, let your child's doctor know. *See [Infant Vision Development: What Can Babies See?](#) (/English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Babys-Vision-Development.aspx) for more information.*
- **Before 4 months**, most babies' eyes occasionally look misaligned (strabismus). However, after 4 months, inward crossing or outward drifting that occurs regularly is usually abnormal. If one of these is present, let your child's doctor know.



Preschool age:

If your child's eyes become misaligned, let your child's doctor know right away. However, vision problems such as a lazy eye ([/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/Pages/Amblyopia-Lazy-Eye.aspx](#)) (amblyopia) may have no warning signs, and your child may not report vision problems. That is why it's important at this time to have your child's vision checked. There are special tests to check your child's vision even if he cannot yet read ([/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Helping-Your-Child-Learn-to-Read.aspx](#)).

All children:

If you notice any of the following signs or symptoms, let your child's doctor know:

- Eyes that are misaligned (look crossed, turn out, or don't focus together)
- White or grayish white color in the pupil
- Eyes that flutter quickly from side to side or up and down
- Eye pain, itchiness, or discomfort reported by your child.
- Redness in either eye that doesn't go away in a few days
- Pus or crust in either eye
- Eyes that are always watery
- Drooping eyelids ([/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/pages/Eyelid-Problems.aspx](#))
- Eyes that often appear overly sensitive to light

Additional Information:

[Vision Screenings](#) (/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/Pages/Vision-Screenings.aspx)

- [Specific Eye Problems in Children](#) (/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/Pages/Specific-Eye-Problems.aspx)

- **Visual System Assessment in Infants, Children, and Young Adults by Pediatricians**
(<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/137/1/e20153596>) (AAP Policy Statement)
- **Procedures for the Evaluation of the Visual System by Pediatricians**
(<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/137/1/e20153597>) (AAP Clinical Report)

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