

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.
 - c. 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.
4. Try to get an appointment when your child is not likely to be sleepy or hungry.
5. 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 treatment¹

- 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 I should 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?

¹Adapted from the American Printing House for the Blind – www.familyconnect.org/info/after-the-diagnosis/working-with-medical-professionals/questions-to-ask/135

6. 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, staff person, or school nurse.
7. 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 school nurse.
8. 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

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.

1. 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 (examples of questions are provided).
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

Contact your school nurse or visit our website:

<https://nc.preventblindness.org/financial-resources-for-vision-services/>



"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). For more information, contact: info@preventblindness.org

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