

**Did you know that 80 per cent of learning is visual?**<sup>1</sup>

**Vision and eye-related problems during the developmental years can significantly impact a child's well-being. Here are some tips to help your child maintain healthy vision...**<sup>2</sup>


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 **ENCOURAGE THEM TO ADOPT  
HEALTHY HABITS**

Promote healthy eating.

Encourage outdoor play (playing at least 1-2 hours outdoors every day in natural sunlight has proven to reduce the risk of children becoming nearsighted).<sup>3</sup>

Reduce their screen time and encourage them to take frequent breaks from screens.

 20-20-20 Rule: Every 20 minutes, encourage your child to look at an object approximately 20 feet (six metres) away.<sup>4</sup> (Why not practice counting to 20 or play a round of 'I Spy' while you're at it?)

Teach them the importance of washing their hands with soap and warm water and using clean washcloths to wash their face.

 **PROTECT THEIR EYES**

Provide them with quality sunglasses and specific sports-related eyewear.

Teach them to not play carelessly with stones, sticks, pencils, utensils or other objects that can hurt their eyes.

Never try to remove something from their eyes (or from your own eyes). Always seek medical help.<sup>5</sup>

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 **BOOK THEIR ANNUAL EYE EXAM AND FOLLOW THE EYE DOCTOR'S  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

A periodic eye test is as important as any other routine health check-up.

Make sure your child gets an eye examination before they start school, to enable early detection and treatment of eye problems that can impact reading and learning.

If your child needs eyeglasses, encourage them to wear them every day.

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## PRIORITIZE YOUR OWN EYE HEALTH AND MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

Proudly wear your sunglasses and your prescription eyeglasses (if needed).

Join them for outdoor play.

Go for your routine eye check-up and tell them all about your experience at the clinic.



## WATCH FOR SIGNS OF A POSSIBLE VISION PROBLEM. A CHILD MIGHT NEED AN EYE EXAM IF THEY...

- Were born pre-term
- Have red, watery or itchy eyes
- Have developmental concerns or reading difficulties
- Tilt their head when looking at objects
- Have parents or siblings who need to wear glasses
- Complain about headaches, sore eyes or seeing double
- Rub their eyes constantly
- Appear to be squinting, or if their eyes appear to drift outwards or inwards
- Move closer to the TV or move objects closer to their face to see

**Reviewed by Dr. Boateng Wiafe, Technical Advisor,  
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1 The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness. (May 9, 2017). The vision of 18 million children. <https://www.iapb.org/news/the-vision-of-18-million-children/>

2 Much of this information was retrieved from the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness Education Activity Pack: <https://www.iapb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/LoveYourEyes-School-Pack.pdf>

3 Lazarus, R. (January 4, 2021). The benefits of outdoor play for children with myopia. Optometrists Network. <https://www.optometrists.org/childrens-vision/guide-to-pediatric-eye-conditions/what-is-myopia/the-benefits-of-outdoor-play-for-children-with-myopia/>

4 American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020). Give your child's eyes a screen-time break: Here's why. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/Pages/What-Too-Much-Screen-Time-Does-to-Your-Childs-Eyes.aspx?>

5 Francis, V., & Wiafe, B. (2007). The healthy eyes activity book: A health teaching book for primary schools (2nd ed, p.54). [https://sightandlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SALF\\_HealthyEyes\\_heab\\_new\\_en.pdf](https://sightandlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SALF_HealthyEyes_heab_new_en.pdf)