Public Health England

NHS

Vision screening for 4 to 5 year olds

Information for parents



Public Health England supports vision screening for 4 to 5 year olds

Vision screening

The NHS recommends vision screening at age 4 to 5. We want to identify children with reduced vision in one or both eyes. The aim is to detect any problems as young as possible so your child can receive effective treatment.

Reduced vision

Vision develops from birth to around 8 years of age. Children rarely complain of having poor vision and it can easily go unnoticed. This means vision screening at age 4 to 5 is really important.

Reduced vision may be caused by the shape of the eye or a turn in the eye (squint). Glasses and/or eye patches may be recommended as treatment for these problems.

Find out more on NHS Choices: **www.nhs.uk/childrens-eyes**

The screening test

Vision screening is usually carried out in your child's school. If your child is not in school long term, other arrangements can be made.

We will assess your child's vision using a letter matching test. The test is fun and your child does NOT need to know their letters. We will put an eye patch over one eye or use a pair of glasses with one eye blanked out.

The test is entirely safe and children enjoy playing the letter matching game.

Possible results

If screening suggests reduced vision, we will send you a letter confirming the results and referring your child for further tests. These could take place at a:

- local optometrist (optician)
- community eye service
- hospital eye service

We will then recommend the best treatment for your child.

If screening does not suggest reduced vision, we will send you a letter confirming this. Vision screening should find most problems but like all types of screening it is not perfect and may not find every child with reduced vision.

Your child's vision will change over time. If you are worried at any time that your child is not seeing properly, you should arrange to see an optician or GP.

Screening is optional

You can choose whether you want your child to have vision screening. We recommend screening to find and treat problems as early as possible. In most cases we can treat reduced vision successfully if detected early. Delayed treatment may not work as well or in some cases may not work at all. This may have an impact on your child's future progress in school, ability to drive or career choices.

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More information about child vision screening: www.nhs.uk/childrens-eyes

Order this leaflet: www.gov.uk/phe/screening-leaflets

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339