

## Supporting you to take care of your child's 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, GP or speak to your local Healthy Family Team (County) / Children's Public Health 0-19 Nursing Service (City)

This leaflet will help you find out more about the importance of vision testing and what to do if you have any concerns.

There is currently no vision screening of children when they commence school and so we are encouraging all parents and carers to take their children for a FREE NHS vision test at a high street optician of their choice before they start school or as soon as possible afterwards.

### Why is it important that children have their vision tested?

Vision continues to develop from birth to around 8 years of age.

Children are usually unaware that their vision is weaker than normal in one or both eyes and there are often no visible signs so problems can easily go unnoticed.

Without routine tests, there is a risk that a problem may not be spotted. This may affect your child's development and education.

It is estimated that 1 in 10 children may develop a condition where the vision in one or both eyes doesn't develop properly. Children may be at greater risk if there is a family history of squints.

### What are the benefits of having your child's eyes tested before they start school?

Detecting any potential problems early.

Vision problems can be treated successfully in younger children, so early detection and treatment with for example, glasses, eye patches or both can be started. Treatment has been shown to be more successful if undertaken before the age of eight.

An eye test also involves looking at the back of your child's eye. This not only checks that their eyes are healthy but can also help identify any wider health concerns.

## Signs that your child may have an eye problem include:

- They may sit close to the TV or hold books/objects close to their face.
- They may rub their eyes a lot (except when tired).
- Their eyes might not look straight (out of alignment), one may turn inwards or outwards. This may be noticed all the time or only happen some of the time.
- They screw their eyes up or close one eye when they read or watch TV.
- They complain of blurred or double vision.
- They may have unexplained headaches.
- Their eyes may move involuntarily (uncontrolled wobbling).
- They are clumsy.
- They avoid activities like reading, writing, drawing or sports.

## Information about eyesight tests

Your child does not have to be able to read in order to get their eyesight checked. Vision testing is free on the NHS for people aged 16 and under and children get an NHS voucher towards the cost of glasses.

Your Healthy Family Team (County) / Children's Public Health 0-19 Nursing Service (City) can also help to refer your child to the Orthoptic department for specialist eye tests if there is a family history of squints or if your child has a noticeable squint.

## Useful links

**Healthy Family Teams (County):**

[www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/healthy-family-teams](http://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/healthy-family-teams)

**Children's Public Health 0-19 Nursing Service (City):**

(0300) 131 0300

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/eye-tests-in-children](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/eye-tests-in-children)

## Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please contact a member of the Patient Experience Team on: [nnicb-nn.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:nnicb-nn.patientexperience@nhs.net) or (0115) 883 9570

If you need any more information, please get in touch with the Engagement Team. To request this information in another language or format please contact the Engagement Team at: [nnicb-nn.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:nnicb-nn.engagement@nhs.net) or call or text 07385360071. If texting or leaving a message, please provide your contact details and a member of the team will get back to you.