

Looking After Your Toddler's Vision

How Vision Typically Develops

Remember – all children develop at their own pace.

Months

6-8

8-12

Over 12

- Sees things of interest and moves toward them
- Eyes appear straight and work together
- Uses vision to help her move between things
- Interested in books and stacking toys
- Can climb and throw

Keeping Eyes Healthy

Protect eyes from injury

- Don't let her play with anything sharp, or walk or run while carrying pencils, popsicle sticks or other pointy things.
- Childproof your home. (See [Childproofing Your Home](#))
- Limit screen time to 1 hour per day. (See [Screen Time](#))
- Keep her at least 3 metres (10 feet) from the TV.

Protect eyes from the sun

Give your toddler a hat and sunglasses. Lenses should fully cover her eyes and offer 99 to 100% UVA and UVB protection. Any cords or strings should come off easily when pulled to avoid strangulation.

Offer healthy food

A healthy diet helps your child develop in many ways, including vision (see [Eating Well](#)).

Help develop her vision

Show her colourful pictures, patterns and mobiles. Encourage her to look at books, climb and run, and play with balls, puzzles and blocks.

Have her eyes checked

The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends that you get your child's eyes checked for the first time at 6 months, again before the age of 3, and every year once she starts school.



FAMILY STORY

I thought my daughter might be having problems seeing because when something was handed to her, she would move her hand around until she hit it. Since she got glasses, she's so much happier and more active.



MONEY SENSE

If you get premium assistance through the Medical Services Plan (MSP) – or if, as of January 2020, you get supplemental services – your child may be eligible for the Healthy Kids program. This can help with the cost of eye care. See [Dental Care, Vision and Hearing](#) in the [Resources](#) chapter for more information.



WARNING SIGNS

Your toddler may have vision problems if she:

- has trouble following things with her eyes or making eye contact
- brings things very close to her eyes to see them
- squints, frowns, blinks or rubs her eyes often
- has headaches
- closes 1 eye or tilts her head when looking at something
- has trouble finding small objects on the floor (after 12 months)
- has red or watery eyes or discharge
- has crossed or turned eyes after 6 months

Talk with an eye doctor ("optometrist"), your health care provider or a public health nurse if you have concerns.