

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sees in full colour• Can see and pick up dropped objects• Sees things of interest and moves toward them• Eyes appear straight and work together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can stare at small objects• Uses vision to help move between things• Can watch things that are moving fast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interested in books and stacking toys• Can climb and throw

Keeping Eyes Healthy

Protect eyes from injury

- Don't let your toddler 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 a maximum of 1 hour per day. (See [Screen Time](#))
- Keep your child 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 the 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 their vision

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

Have their eyes checked

Children's vision continues to develop as they grow, but issues become more difficult to fix when they're older. BC Doctors of Optometry (see bc.doctorsofoptometry.ca/) recommends children have their first eye exam between 6 and 9 months. It's important for your toddler to have a full eye exam by the time they start kindergarten (or by age 3 if there's a family history of vision problems). If a full exam isn't possible, your health care provider can help detect lazy eye.



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

B.C. health coverage pays all or part of the cost of children's eye exams. If you have a modest income, you may also qualify for MSP Supplementary Benefits, which can help pay for glasses. Contact the Healthy Kids program at 1-866-866-0800.

If you're First Nations, the First Nations Health Authority Health Benefits program may pay for medical and dental costs not covered by other insurance. Email healthbenefits@fnha.ca or call 1-855-550-5454 toll free.

If you're a refugee, call Health Insurance BC at 1-800-663-7100 to find out if you qualify for MSP coverage. If not, you may be able to get help through the Interim Federal Health Program. Call 1-888-242-2100 to learn more.



WARNING SIGNS

Your toddler may have vision problems if they:

- have trouble following things with their eyes or making eye contact
- bring things very close to their eyes to see them
- squint, frown, blink or rub their eyes often
- have headaches
- close 1 eye or tilt their head when looking at something
- have trouble finding small objects on the floor (after 12 months)
- have red or watery eyes or discharge
- have 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.

