

CHILDREN'S EXAMINATION OFFICE Q&A RESOURCE GUIDE

Quick phone call Q&A for staff

What age should my child have their first eye exam?

The American Optometric Association recommends 6 months to 12 months (our InfantSEE program), at age 3 and before starting first grade, then every year following.

What is the InfantSEE program?

InfantSEE is a no-cost public health program developed to provide professional eye care for infants nationwide. Through InfantSEE, our doctor will provide a one-time, comprehensive eye assessment to infants in their first year of life, offering early detection of potential eye and vision problems at no cost, regardless of income.

Is there truly a need to have my baby/child examined?

The American Public Health Association resolution 2001-1 states that infants should receive his/her first eye exam at age 6 months to 1 year. A significant number of treatable eye conditions such as amblyopia (2.5%-4.5%), eye turns (4%-5%), clinically significant far-sightedness (3%-6%) and total refractive errors (12%) will develop prior to age 5. These may seem like small numbers, but when combined, all vision skill disorders and eye health problems—each able to diminish a child's future performance in school and beyond—may affect 10-20 percent of the population. Early detection is the key for your baby/child.

What will happen at my baby's/child's examination?

Typically, an infant/small child will sit on their parent's lap during the assessment, in which our doctor will use lights and other hand held objects—like finger puppets—to check that the baby's/child's eyes are working together and that there are no significant issues that will interfere with proper vision development. If your child is older, we will use more subjective measurements and tests to ensure your child is achieving the best vision and function as possible. Our doctor may use drops or spray to dilate the baby's/child's pupils to get a better look inside and ensure the health of the eye. Generally, infants and children find the exam painless and often fun.

What is the doctor looking for during the exam?

Our doctor will test to make sure the child is seeing clearly; will look for nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism, and check to see that the eyes are seeing straight and working together as a team. The health of your child's eyes will be assessed, as well. Although serious problems are not common, it is important to identify specific risk factors at this stage.

General office staff Q&A

When scheduling the appointment, is there any special information that we need to ask the parent about or to relay to the parents in preparation for the examination?

Ask about any special concerns or conditions, and the child's daily schedule, to avoid nap time, extreme fatigue after school or any other considerations that may inhibit the child from concentrating. Assure parents that the child will respond better when they are alert and relaxed.

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Do I need to send out paperwork in advance of the appointment?

Yes, if possible. Please send out the history form, the cover letter and any registration forms your office utilizes, or direct them to your website for forms, at least one week prior to the appointment. It is best to have all initial paperwork completed prior to the child's arrival in your office, and to have them arrive as close to the scheduled appointment time as possible. Keeping wait times to a minimum will allow the child to be less fussy and more amiable during the exam.

How do we handle recall for the child?

Check with your doctor as to when they wish to have the child return for their next appointment. Some doctors would like to evaluate the child yearly. The AOA's Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines: Comprehensive Pediatric Eye and Vision Examinations recommends at least once between 3 and 5 years of age, before first grade and annually thereafter. You can find the complete guidelines at

<https://www.aoa.org/optometrists/tools-and-resources/evidence-based-optometry/evidence-based-clinical-practice-guidelines/evidence-based-clinical-practice-guideline-comprehensive-pediatric-eye-and-vision-examination>.