



SCHOOL VISION SCREENINGS

As part of routine school health assessments, children's eyesight is commonly tested in school vision screenings. However, passing a school vision screening does not guarantee the absence of a vision problem. These screenings are typically limited in scope to reading letters on a distance eye chart and are not intended to replace a comprehensive vision evaluation that can detect vision based learning problems. In fact, many times these important vision disorders routinely evade detection.

It is estimated that 35-40% of all children with learning disabilities have visual problems. Specifically, at least 20% of individuals with learning disabilities have been found to have prominent visual information processing problems, and 15-20% of them have problems with visual efficiency skills.

Without efficient visual skills the act of reading can be very frustrating. To the child with a vision based learning problem – often called a “hidden disability” – these frustrations can spill over into behaviors that can present themselves in a fashion similar to attention deficit disorders such as ADD/ADHD, or reading problems such as dyslexia.

Prevention of vision problems and their consequences require timely detection. The College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD) recommends that all children receive a thorough professional eye and vision examination, particularly one that includes a comprehensive assessment of visual information processing and binocular function. A child should have a developmental vision assessment at age 3 and again at age 5 prior to entering school to monitor vision development. School vision screening alone are not sufficient for investigation of visual function for school-aged children.

Members of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD) are optometrists with a special interest in vision development and are skilled in providing comprehensive vision care for children. Fellows of the College have certified their competency in this area. For further information contact COVD or consult with a COVD member optometrist.

This informational paper was produced by the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, which board certifies qualified optometric physicians in vision therapy. For further information, see our website, www.covd.org.

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