



211 West Wacker Drive
Suite 1700
Chicago, Illinois 60606
1-800-331-2020
www.preventblindness.org

PLANNING A TRIP TO THE EYE DOCTOR?

Prevent Blindness America recommends a continuum of eye care for children to include both vision screening and comprehensive eye examinations. All children, even those with no signs of trouble, should have their eyes checked at regular intervals. Any child who experiences vision problems or shows symptoms of eye trouble should receive a comprehensive eye exam by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist. If you are planning to take your child to the eye doctor, here are some helpful tips.

1. Ask your relatives, friends and neighbors if they know the name of an eye doctor who is good with children.
2. Schedule the appointment when your child is not likely to be sleepy or hungry. If your child has a "cranky" time of day, schedule around it.
3. Make a list of your questions and bring it with you. Take notes when speaking to the doctor, so that you can refer to them later.
4. Have a plan ready in case you need to spend time in the waiting room. Bring a favorite storybook, coloring book or small toy that your child can play with quietly. A snack can also help to pass the time.
5. Let your child watch a family member get an eye exam. Have the doctor explain what is being done, step by step, and encourage the child to ask questions.
6. Bring your child's favorite cuddly toy. The doctor can "examine" the bear or doll and holding a toy may keep little hands off of expensive equipment.
7. Relax. Children look to adults for cues: if you seem nervous, your child may become anxious. A trip to the eye doctor should be fun for both of you.

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening training, community and patient service programs and research.

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