

# Vision Loss FACT SHEET

## What is vision loss?

Vision loss means that a person's eyesight cannot be corrected to a "normal" level. Vision loss can vary greatly among children and can be caused by many things.

## What causes loss of vision?

Vision loss can be caused by damage to the eye itself, by the eye being shaped incorrectly, or even by a problem in the brain. Babies can be born unable to see, and vision loss can occur anytime during a person's life.

## When should my child be checked?

Your child should be checked for vision problems by an eye doctor (an ophthalmologist), pediatrician, or other trained specialist at:

- newborn to 3 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- about 3 years
- about 5 years

Having your child's vision checked is especially important if someone in your family has had vision problems.

## What are some of the signs of vision loss?

A child with vision loss might:

- close or cover one eye
- squint the eyes or frown
- complain that things are blurry or hard to see
- have trouble reading or doing other close-up work, or hold objects close to eyes in order to see
- blink more than usual or seem cranky when doing close-up work (such as looking at books)

One eye of a child with vision loss could look out or cross. One or both eyes could be watery, and one or both of the child's eyelids could also look red-rimmed, crusted, or swollen.

## What can I do if I think my child may have vision loss?

Talk with your child's doctor or nurse. If you or your doctor think there could be a problem, you can take your child to see a pediatric eye doctor (ophthalmologist) or other specialist, and you can contact your local early intervention agency (for children under 3) or public school (for children 3 and older). To find out who to speak to in your area, you can contact the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities by logging on to [www.nichcy.org/states.htm](http://www.nichcy.org/states.htm). In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has information about vision loss ([www.cdc.gov/ncbddd](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd)).

Treating vision problems early may protect your child's sight, and teaching children with severe vision loss how to function as early as possible can help them reach their full potential.

[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)



Learn the Signs. Act Early.