

Symptoms Checklist

When Is Learning Difficulty Due to a Vision Problem?

While learning occurs through a number of complex and interrelated processes, vision plays a key role. Many signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with learning disabilities are similar to those caused by vision problems. This is why it is so important that a comprehensive vision examination be part of the interdisciplinary evaluation of all children who are failing to succeed in school.

Here are some signs and symptoms to look for that may indicate a vision problem.

Symptoms

Possible Vision Problems

-
- Complains of blurred vision
 - Rubs eyes frequently
 - Squints

Nearsightedness, Farsightedness, or Astigmatism

inability to see clearly in the distance or up close

- Closes or covers one eye
- Occasionally sees double
- Rubs eyes frequently
- Able to read for only a short time
- Poor reading comprehension

Eye coordination problems

inability to coordinate the eyes together effectively

- Holds things very close
- Complains of blurred vision
- Poor reading comprehension
- Says eyes are tired
- Able to read for only a short time
- Has headaches when reading

Eye focusing problems

inability to easily refocus eyes or maintain clear focus

- Moves head excessively when reading
- Frequently loses place, skips lines when reading
- Uses finger to keep place
- Poor reading comprehension
- Short attention span

Eye tracking problems

inadequate ability to smoothly and accurately move the eyes from one point to another

- Mistakes words with similar beginnings
- Difficulty recognizing letters, words, or simple shapes and forms
- Can't distinguish the main idea from insignificant details
- Trouble learning basic math concepts of size, magnitude, and position

Faulty visual form perception

inability to discriminate differences in size, shape, or form

- Trouble visualizing what is read
 - Poor reading comprehension
 - Poor speller
 - Trouble with mathematical concepts
 - Poor recall of visually presented material
-

Faulty visual memory

inability to remember and understand what is seen

- Sloppy handwriting and drawing
- Can't stay on lines
- Poor copying skills
- Can respond orally but not in writing

Faulty visual motor integration

inability to process and reproduce visual images by writing or drawing

-
- Trouble learning right and left
 - Reverses letters and words
 - Trouble writing and remembering letters and numbers

Difficulty with laterality and directionality

Poor development of left/right awareness

Physical signs or symptoms

- Frequent headaches or eye strain
- Blurring of distance or near vision, particularly after reading or other close work
- Avoidance of close work or other visually demanding tasks
- Poor judgment of depth
- Turning of an eye in or out, up or down
- Tendency to cover or close one eye, or favor the vision in one eye
- Double vision
- Poor hand-eye coordination
- Difficulty following a moving target
- Dizziness or motion sickness

Performance problems

- Poor reading comprehension
- Difficulty copying from one place to another
- Loss of place, repetition, and/or omission of words while reading
- Difficulty changing focus from distance to near and back
- Poor posture when reading or writing
- Poor handwriting
- Can respond orally but can't get the same information down on paper
- Letter and word reversals
- Difficulty judging sizes and shapes

How to Identify a Vision Problem

Children should be referred for a **comprehensive eye exam** whenever visual symptoms are noticed or if they are not achieving their potential. Many of these vision problems will not be detected during a school vision screening or limited vision assessment as part of a school physical or routine pediatric health evaluation.