



# Eyes and Ears

**Any concerns with vision and hearing?**

Vision and hearing are important to a child's development because the eyes and ears collect information about the environment and play a key role in the development of speech and language

## Eye and ear disorders are often diagnosed during routine examinations in childhood

### Eyesight and Vision

Your child should visit an optician at least once every year for a vision test, from the age of 4½ – 5 years.

Throughout the year, look for things such as squinting, headaches, or rubbing of eyes.

These could be the signs that your child might be having trouble seeing.

Babies can see from birth and by ten months should be able to see small objects such as crumbs or fluff. By one year of age they should point to distant objects e.g. a door or bus.

#### Does the child:

- hold objects close to look at them
- screw up their eyes
- sit close to the television
- squint or cross eyes

Does a member of the family have eye problems (squint, short/long sight, wear glasses).

Young babies eyes may roll away from each other. This is normal, however later if you notice a squint or your child is squinting all or a lot of the time, speak to the GP, who may refer you to an orthoptist or ophthalmologist who specialises in children's eyes.

It is important that any problems with children's eyes are identified and responded to as soon as possible, as they can affect social and educational development.

# Hearing

Watch your child for any signs of hearing difficulties.

For instance, do they watch TV with the volume up high?

Does your child seem to ignore you unless they watch you speak?

Even a mild or partial hearing loss can affect a child's ability to speak and understand language.

Hearing and talking are closely linked and it is normal for two year olds to pronounce words incorrectly.

At eighteen months a child can say between six to twenty words, but understand many more.

At two years they can speak fifty or more recognisable words and understand many more.

By two and a half years, two hundred or more words can be spoken.

## **Children will:**

- Turn to familiar sounds e.g. front door opening/closing
- Pay attention to activities that include play with sounds, song and rhymes
- Follow instructions.

If there are any concerns speak to the Health Visitor at a community clinic in a Children's Centre, attend a Speech and Language Triage session at the Children's Centre, or visit your GP if you suspect your child is having hearing problems.

Eye examinations are free to all children under sixteen,  
book an appointment at the nearest opticians.

Routine eye tests start  
from 4½ to 5 years of age.

Remember: flying's effects on ears.  
Many of us have felt that weird ear-popping sensation when we fly.  
For children (especially babies and young children),  
it can seem especially odd and even scary at first.  
But it's a common, normal part of flying.

If you suspect your child is having vision or hearing problems,  
visit your GP



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