

## Importance of Preschool Vision Screening: 6 Reasons

Preschool vision screening is important for at least the following 6 reasons:

1. Research suggests that 1 in 10 to 20 young children will have vision disorders that can lead to *permanent* vision impairments, including amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (lazy eye, misaligned eyes), and abnormal refractive errors, such as hyperopia, myopia, astigmatism, and anisometropia). If these disorders are detected and treated early, preferably before a child reaches age 5, many can be corrected.<sup>2,5,1,2</sup>
2. Early detection and treatment increases a child's chances of achieving good treatment outcomes.<sup>2</sup>
3. Professional experience indicates that oftentimes parents are unaware that their children have difficulty seeing clearly; thus, many vision problems are undetected by parents.<sup>3,4</sup>
4. Young children are unaware of how they should see,<sup>4</sup> typically cannot tell adults they have blurred vision, and must rely on adults to detect their vision problems. For example, a 5-year-old child who failed his Kindergarten vision screen in West Virginia, when asked by his mother why he did not tell her he could not see clearly, said, "I didn't know."
5. Typically no pain is involved with vision problems.<sup>4</sup>
6. Children do not "outgrow" amblyopia and strabismus.

### References

<sup>1</sup>Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (2004, May). Screening for visual impairment in children younger than age 5 years. Retrieved May 23, 2010, from <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/3rduspstf/visionscr/vischr.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Wasserman, R. C., Croft, C. A., & Brotherton, S. E. (1992). Preschool vision screening in pediatric practice: A study from the pediatric research in office settings (PROS) network. *Pediatrics*, 89(5). Retrieved May 23, 2010, from [http://www.aap.org/research/periodicsurvey/peds5\\_92.htm](http://www.aap.org/research/periodicsurvey/peds5_92.htm)

<sup>3</sup>Brown, M. S. (1975). Vision screening of preschool children: How to check on visual acuity and heterophoria as part of a routine physical examination. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 14 (10), 968-973.

<sup>4</sup>Schmidt, P. P. (1997). Screening for the vision problems of young children. In B. Moore (Ed.), *Eye care for infants and young children* (pp. 175-189). Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.