

10 SIGNS YOUR CHILD'S VISION MAY BE THE PROBLEM

20/20 Isn't the Whole Story

Many vision issues that affect learning and behavior don't show up on a standard eye chart. That's because true vision is more than seeing clearly: it's how the eyes and brain work together to focus, move, and make sense of the world. This guide helps you recognize the signs of a functional vision problem that might be holding your child back.

1. **Avoids reading or near work**

- *Why it matters:* Your child may be struggling with eye teaming or focusing skills. If the eyes don't work comfortably together up close, reading can feel exhausting, so they avoid it.

2. **Loses place when reading or uses a finger to keep place**

- *Why it matters:* This may point to poor eye tracking or weak visual attention. The eyes might not smoothly follow a line of print, making it hard to stay on the right word.

3. **Complains of headaches or tired eyes**

- *Why it matters:* These symptoms often come from overusing the visual system to compensate for poor eye coordination, focusing fatigue, or uncorrected visual misalignments.

4. **Reverses letters or words after age 7**

- *Why it matters:* Persistent reversals may reflect delays in visual processing and spatial awareness; skills the brain uses to understand directionality and symbol placement.

5. **Struggles to copy from the board**

- *Why it matters:* This can indicate difficulty with eye focusing when shifting focus between near and far, or with or without visual memory, trying to remember what was seen in the order in which it was presented.

6. **Clumsy, often bumps into things or knocks items over**

- *Why it matters:* This could signal problems with depth perception or peripheral awareness, how the brain uses visual input to interpret the spatial world surrounding one's body.

7. **Short attention span for visual tasks**

- *Why it matters:* If visual tasks feel difficult or uncomfortable, your child may avoid them or zone out quickly. This can be mistaken for attention issues, but vision is often the underlying cause especially if this only shows up when reading or doing schoolwork / homework.

8. **Tilts head, closes one eye, or squints when focusing**

- *Why it matters:* These are often coping strategies to reduce double vision or blur, especially if the eyes aren't working together as a team (binocular vision dysfunction).

9. **Poor handwriting or spacing on the page**

- *Why it matters:* Handwriting relies heavily on visual-motor control. Trouble with eye tracking, spatial organization, or eye-hand coordination can make writing difficult and frustrating.

10. **Excellent verbal skills—but reading doesn't match up**

- *Why it matters:* This mismatch may suggest a hidden visual processing issue. Kids with strong language skills can often mask vision problems — until the academic demands grow.

What to Do Next

If several of these signs sound familiar, your child may be dealing with a **functional vision problem**, and these are often missed in even the best standard eye exams. The good news is, these issues can be treated very successfully.

What you need to do is search:

- Behavioral Optometrist
- Developmental Optometrist
- Vision Therapy Optometrist
- Neuro-Optometrist

Near you and call them to see what the process is at their office to become a new patient and have their “functional vision” checked out.