

Eye Examinations for Babies

Your baby should have his or her first visual exam at 6 months of age or sooner if a problem is evident. If you notice your baby's eyes turning outward or inward (lasting more than a few seconds) or any other signs of eye problems, locate a Doctor who is experienced in comprehensive exams for infants.

Baby's Milestones for Visual and Motor Development

A baby's failure to see well can affect his or her entire development. Look for these milestones in your infant's visual and motor development.

Does your baby:

- Follow an object with his or her eyes by 5 weeks?
- Bring his or her hands together by 8 weeks?
- Hold and sustain direct eye contact with you by 3 months?
- Turn his or her eyes together to locate near objects by 4 months?
- Make the sounds p, b, t, d and my by 5 months?
- Roll over independently by 7 months?
- Sit without support by 8 months?
- Creep and crawl by 9 months?

Seek Professional help if you notice a delay in any of the development milestones listed above. The sooner any vision problems are detected and treated, the more likely the problem can be fully corrected. In general, babies and children do not outgrow visual problems.



Phone: 717.687.8141

Fax: 717.687.7930

20 Lancaster Ave.
Strasburg, PA 17579

WWW.STRASBURGFAMILYEYECARE.COM

Vision Development in Infants



Infant Development

“Learning to See”

Infants are not born with complete vision. As babies grow, good vision is developed through a learned process of looking, touching, and exploring.

Encourage Your Child's Vision Development

Any Activity which creates sensory awareness on the part of infants, toddler's preschoolers (and adults) sets the stage for learning development. Once something catches our attention, we can then begin to explore how it impacts our senses (what does it look like, feel like, smell like, taste like, sound like...) and how we might respond to it. This response could involve avoidance, fear, attraction, further exploration, and interaction, even memory of the same or similar experiences. The more positive experiences we have, the more likely we are to explore with confidence, interact creatively and learn from new experiences. In these way infants, toddlers and preschoolers are very much like older children and adults.

What is unique about these first three years is the astounding number of new experiences and the tremendous learning that takes place during this period of development. That is why we call this early learning *development* – we start with no experience and move at an astounding rate to become well organized, multi-sensory learners ready to explore and change our world. We build quickly on what we have learned.

The earliest learning occurs as a result of reflex generated movements in response to the world around us as well as random changes in our own body position. We quickly learn from these motor experiences how to generate our own noises and movements and we begin to see the changes in ourselves and our environments happen. Our world is one big learning playground after that!



Best Environments and Experiences for Vision Development

Number one is freedom to explore the changes our infant movements create. Tummy time on an open flat surface allows the greatest freedom of movement and builds strength for head and body control. Eventually this leads to organized movement patterns which allow even greater exploration with creeping and crawling.

Language and sound patterns are as important as vision and movement in learning about where and what is in our environment. When we both see and hear consistent patters, we link them and not only recognize and remember, but begin to anticipate and predict. The baby who hears Mom's voice certainly learns quickly to look for her in anticipation of the next meal! This process of matching what each of our senses tells us about the same event is called integration and is the highest level of organization. Now the scenes no longer function in isolation, but contribute to the total learning experience. Eventually, as adults, we are so well organized and integrated that we can call up the total experience again with only a clue from one sense. That is why reading is so much fun!

Open ended play time allows the freedom for the mind that open floor and tummy time allows for the body. The opportunity to explore new tricks for old toys, movements, sounds, shapes, colors, etc. feeds our creative spirit and encourages confident discovery of relationships we might otherwise miss. Discovery of new ways to do the same thing, new outcomes for similar movement s is what helps us experience the value of flexibility. Things do not have to always be the same or be done the same way to be successful. We learn tolerance and respect for innovation, confidence in problem solving and appreciate for variety. We are open to learning new tricks and, in fact, start to look for new tricks to learn. Learning is fun, exciting and beneficial. We learn to appreciate the opportunity to learn new tricks from others and share the experience of discovery. We learn to take joy in the discoveries of others and build on their ideas. Now we are ready to take on the world of school and life in our community as an adult.

How to Help Your Baby's Visual Development

1 Month –

- Hold and feed your infant from alternating sides to promote adequate visual development of boy eyes. Place your baby in his or her crib from different directions. Also, periodically change the location of the crib so the infant can see the world from different viewpoints. Hang a mobile off to the side so your baby can see it through the slats of the crib. Change the position of the mobile every other day.

2 Months –

- Allow your baby to explore with his or her hands. Provide stimuli of many different textures, sizes, weights, and forms.

4 Months –

- Allow your baby to help hold the nursing bottle, and provide clean, smooth objects that can be explored with mouth and hands. Start to play the “patty cake” game.

6 Months –

- Play “peek-a-boo” to develop visual memory. Move the crib mobile closer to your baby so it can be reached and hit to make it move. Tie bells on booties so the infant can learn about his or her body through sound and movement. \

Take your baby in for his or her first vision examination.

8 Months –

- Talk to your baby frequently so he or she can associate experiences with words. Place objects on a highchair tray that can be pushed off and dropped to the floor.

10-12 Months -

- Do not rush your baby into walking. Creeping on all fours is very important for developing coordination of the body, as well as the two eyes.