

Optometrists Network

Eye Problems Sometimes Mistaken For Learning Disabilities Kids' Vision Problems Often Go Unnoticed

from WRAL.com, September 19, 2002

For more articles on disabilities and special ed visit www.bridges4kids.org.

If your child can't see well, you might expect him to tell you things are fuzzy, or complain of headaches. But a surprising number of kids' vision problems are never picked up, and the children end up exhibiting behavior or learning problems.

One out of four kids in school may have vision problems, which leads to some unexpected issues.

"Some kids are labeled as learning disabled, ADD or ADHD, or some are just labeled as lazy, they don't want to do the work. The child could act up in school because it's hard for them to concentrate up close, hard for them to focus, hard to keep their eyes on the page," said Dr. Ida Chung of the SUNY College of Optometry. That's one reason doctors recommend kids get their eyes checked at age 1, 3 and 5, especially since some eye problems need to be treated early or they turn into permanent disabilities.

Also realize that children may not tell you they are having trouble because they don't realize that the world isn't supposed to be all blurry.

Signs Of Vision Problems:

The following signs and symptoms usually indicate vision problems. Call an eye doctor for a diagnostic evaluation if you or someone close to you exhibits any of the following:

- Holding a book very close (7 or 8 inches away)
- Turning head to use only one eye
- Covering or closing one eye while reading
- Squinting for either near or far visual tasks
- Moving head back and forth, rather than eyes, while reading
- Omitting letters, words or phrases
- Complains of seeing double or of blurred vision
- Writing that is difficult to read, crowded or inconsistent in size
- Mistakes words with similar beginnings
- Miscalls or omits "small" words
- Excessive blinking or watering of eyes
- Losing place while reading
- Using a finger or marker to keep place
- Headaches during or after reading
- Misaligns digits in columns of numbers

- Writing uphill or downhill
- Reversing letters (d for b) or words (saw for was)
- Rereads or skips words while reading
- Excessive rubbing of eyes while engaged in visual tasks
- Fatigues easily
- Lip reading or whisper reading to reinforce comprehension
- Poor eye-hand coordination, i.e. difficulty with catching a ball
- Burning or itching eyes

Taken from:

<http://www.optometrists.org/>