

Spectacles for Children

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The main solution used for children with poor vision is the use of prescription glasses. Depending on what your child's prescription strength is and their visual needs, our optometrists will suggest specific styles of lenses.

Reading Glasses

Many people associate reading glasses with old people but that is not always the case. Some people also think that glasses are used only to make things seem clearer for people who are short sighted or long sighted. Reading glasses can be worn for other reasons.

Many children and teens benefit from wearing glasses to help them maintain normal eye coordination without effort for prolonged close work. For example, reading glasses can help children when reading in class or studying after school.



In most cases reading glasses may appear to make very little difference to the clarity of the print. Their main purpose for children is to enable both eyes to aim and focus in a relaxed and comfortable manner.

Children in particular may have trouble understanding how these glasses help them, or why they have to wear them, when there is no sudden or dramatic change in the clarity of their vision. The benefits of reading spectacles are subtle; they reduce fatigue. It is important to explain patiently to remind children that they are **helping them to see more easily rather than more clearly**. Wearers must also get used to taking off the spectacles, or looking over the top of them, to see clearly in the distance.

Bifocals

Bifocals are special types of lenses that contain two prescriptions: one for distance and one for reading, overcoming the issue of having to take off reading spectacles to see more clearly in the distance. The reading prescription is in a segment in the lower part of the lens because we naturally glance downward while reading. It is much less common for children to wear bifocals; the usual reason is to help to relax an overactive close focusing system. Bifocals can be useful in treating some forms of



short-sightedness. Some children who have trouble relaxing their close focusing (accommodation) may become short-sighted. The bifocal lens allows them to relax their focusing for close objects but retain clear distance vision. Bifocals are also used occasionally with children and young adults in the case of convergence excess tendency to over-converge or go cross-eyed.

Wearing properly prescribed spectacles of any description cannot weaken a child's vision. For most short-sighted children and teenagers wearing bifocals, it is necessary for them to be worn only for a few years.



Prismatic glasses

Some eye co-ordination problems may be treated temporarily with a special type of lens called a prismatic lens. Prismatic lenses alter the wear's perception of where an object is and may not make the objects clearer. The edges of prismatic lenses are of different thicknesses. The thin side of a prismatic lens is known as the apex and the thick side is known as the base. Depending on where the base of the prismatic lens is positioned in the spectacle frame, objects may appear to be smaller but closer (base-out prescription) or larger and further away (base in prescription). These optical effects are normal and in a short time the visual system adapts to the distortions. Often the best way for a child to adapt to prismatic spectacles is to wear them while walking around or simply moving around.

