

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for August 23, 2021
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about vision for children and as always, look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

I vaguely remember standing in line for vision screening in third grade. I was shocked and a little disappointed when the school nurse told me I should visit an eye doctor. A few weeks later I was the proud owner of pastel pink framed eyeglasses. The part I will never forget is staring out the window the entire car ride home, because for the first time ever I could see individual leaves on the trees instead of a blur of green.

August is a time to bring awareness to children's vision as it is both Children's Eye Health and Safety Month and National Children's Vision and Learning Month.

According to Kid-Sight.org, it is important to remember that a child may not know that they have a vision problem. This is just like my experience as a child, as I didn't know what I was supposed to be seeing. Parents should look for the "ABCs" of vision problems:

- A = "Appearance." Do you ever notice your child's eye turning? Does your child squint to see things? Do your child's eyes seem to be red or swollen?
- B = "Behavior." Does your child sit really close to the television? Does your child seem clumsy or have poor hand-eye coordination? Does your child avoid doing sustained visual activities like reading?
- C = "Complaints." Does your child complain of blurry or double vision? Does your child say that their eyes hurt or burn? Does your child often complain of headaches?

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, refractive errors are very common. They cause blurry vision and are corrected with glasses. Farsightedness is hyperopia. Close objects, like reading a book, are blurry to a child. Nearsightedness is myopia. A child sees near objects more clearly than distant objects, like a white board. With astigmatism, both near and far vision are blurry.

Parents and caregivers can encourage a young child's vision skills with toys and activities. Some great examples include activities for hand-eye coordination like puzzles, building blocks, and

making jewelry/stringing beads. Painting and drawing aid in this development. And though we may not think of playing catch with a ball as building vision skills, it is.

In fact, my eye doctor shared with me that more time outdoors may lower a child's risk for myopia. A study looked at kids spending 40 extra minutes outdoors each day. These kids lowered their risk of getting myopia or of a stronger prescription of eyeglasses. The kids who spent more time indoors (reading or on their computer devices) were more likely to get myopia or severe myopia. This is one more reason to encourage a balance of indoor and outdoor time for children's health and well-being. Just remember that while you are all outdoors, be sure to wear sunglasses and hats.

All children should also wear protective eyewear while participating in sports or recreational activities. Eye injuries are the leading cause of vision loss in children. There are about 42,000 sports-related eye injuries every year in America, and children suffer most of these injuries.

According to vision therapy proponents, visual acuity (like having 20/20 vision) is only part of the vision skills needed for learning. Other skills such as both eyes working together, focusing, and visual tracking are not evaluated in school screenings and often go unevaluated. There are some who suggest that the root of some learning disabilities or diagnosed behavior issues may be vision problems. It may be something to consider visiting a vision professional about.

Today I'll leave you with this quote from Helen Keller, "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."

Here are some upcoming programs from OSU Extension: The OSU Extension Home Food Preservation Team is hosting a series of webinars about basic canning topics. These programs are on Tuesday afternoons from 4:00-5:00 PM. Future topics include Canning Pie Fillings, Preserving Hot Peppers, and Canning Winter Squash. Please register at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!