



Glasses Fitting for Children

WHAT TYPE OF LENSES SHOULD BE USED FOR CHILDREN WITH GLASSES?

Polycarbonate (shatter proof) lenses are the ONLY type of lenses that should be prescribed to children unless your ophthalmologist tells you differently. Polycarbonate lenses have built in U.V. protection to block harmful rays from the sun, they are light in weight and work well with strong prescriptions and come with an anti-scratch coating.

WHICH OPTICAL SHOP IS BEST?

Optical shops (places that make glasses) that work with children a lot are often better at fitting glasses for children. If frames and lenses are not fit well, trying to get a child to wear glasses may very hard. These optical shops that work with children a lot also often have a better selection of children's glasses frames. Your local optician can work with your ophthalmologist to be sure that the glasses are the correct power and fit for your child.

Ask your optical shop about any frame or lens warranty. If there is a warranty available, be sure to ask what it covers. Most warranties do not cover lost glasses but may cover broken glasses or scratched lenses.

WHAT GLASSES FRAME SHOULD BE CHOSEN?

Size is very important (see Figures 1 and 2). Glasses must fit well so that they are comfortable and give clear vision. If glasses are not comfortable, a child may not want to wear them. Remember that your child will spend most of the day wearing his or her glasses and well-fitting glasses will hold up better in the long run. The frame should be adjusted as needed for comfort and best fit on your child's face. In order to keep the glasses from sliding down the nose, some children wear straps or temple tips (also called ear grips, ear locks or stay puts)(see Figure 3). Many children's frames also have flexible arms so they don't snap off as easily.



Fig. 1: Photos of glasses fitting for a child. Glasses on top photo are too small. Glasses on the bottom photo are the correct size.

In general, frames should not touch the cheeks or eye lashes and the eyes should be in the center of the lenses. The frame and nose pads can be changed to help with fit.



Fig. 2: Well-fitting glasses.





Fig 3: Glasses with temple tips. (also called ear grips, ear locks or stay puts)

In some cases of eye crossing or after cataract surgery, children's glasses may have a bifocal which means there is an extra stronger prescription for reading added to the bottom of the glasses lens. The line on bifocal lenses should go through the middle or immediately below the pupil (the dark spot in the center of the colored part of the eye). This is different than what is seen in adult glasses. And it should be easy to see the line so the child knows where to look through the bifocal.(see Figure 4).



Fig. 4: Well-fitting glasses with bifocal.

Glasses for infants and toddlers often come with cable temples which look like hooks or curves at the end of the glasses arm (see Figure 5). This type of

glasses arm wraps around the ear. It is important that the cable (the flexible part behind the ear) is not too tight and the temple (the arm of the glasses) length is not too short. Children can grow out of cable frames very quickly, so ask about temple tips (see Figure 3) as a different option for glasses. Temple tips work the same way as cables but can be changed easily as the child grows.



Fig. 5: Poorly-fitting cable temples on left and well-fitting cables on right

DO CHILDREN LOVE GLASSES AS SOON AS THEY GET THEM?

Nearsighted ([myopic](#)) children often like their glasses right away. However, far-sighted ([hyperopic](#)) children and children with astigmatism (a curve to the shape of the eye) may take several weeks to get used to wearing glasses. If the child does not wear the glasses well, the ophthalmologist may change the prescription or give eye drops to help the child relax their eyes and get used to the glasses.

HOW DO I CARE FOR GLASSES?

When not being worn, glasses should be placed in a case and should never be placed face down on a surface as it may scratch the lenses. The motto for



children is “Glasses stay on your face or they go in your case”. Lenses may be cleaned with a soft cotton cloth or a special “lens cloth”. If the frames are bent or do not fit well, take them to your optical shop so they can help make some changes. Do not try to bend or change the frame yourself as it may break.

Speak with your ophthalmologist or optician if you have more questions about glasses fitting.

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