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## Eyeing Your Back to School Checklist? Include a Vision Exam for Your Child *Vision Problems Can Interfere With Success in the Classroom*

Reading, writing, arithmetic.

It's back-to-school season.

If you are like most parents, you are shopping for clothes, shoes, supplies and backpacks for your child. But what else should be on your back-to-school checklist? A vision checkup for your child, because children can't learn if they can't see.

According to the [American Optometric Association \(AOA\)](#), regular eye exams are important because kids often won't mention vision problems. If untreated, he or she could suffer eyestrain and headaches that affect concentration or lead to damaged vision. Poor vision also can affect a child's ability to read and learn.

"It's incredibly important to be proactive with your child's eye health because it's generally easiest to treat impairments when they're diagnosed early," said Paul Walker, senior product manager at [Assurant Employee Benefits](#). "That's why we developed a preventive plan that generally covers yearly eye exams by qualified professionals, as well as glasses and contacts. If you notice symptoms indicating poor eyesight in your child, take them for an evaluation as soon as possible to help protect their vision in the long run."

The AOA suggests that a child's brain learns how to use eyes to see, just as it learns how to use muscles to walk or run. If a vision problem goes untreated, the brain learns to accommodate the impairment, creating additional problems.

Among the most common vision problems is amblyopia, or lazy eye, which can result in decreased vision or vision loss, according to the AOA. In children with this condition, the brain may begin ignoring signals from the weaker eye. However, there are a number of treatments for lazy eye, including eye patches, eye drops, glasses/contact lenses and, depending on the individual, surgery.

Other common vision problems can include:

- Nearsightedness, which means a child cannot see well at a distance
- Farsightedness, which makes it difficult to see objects up close
- Astigmatism, an imperfection in the curvature of the eye, which can cause blurred vision

Parents should be alert to these symptoms in school-age children:

- Being unable to see objects at a distance
- Having trouble reading the blackboard
- Squinting
- Difficulty reading
- Sitting too close to the TV

To learn more about choosing vision plans, visit [Assurant Employee Benefits website](#).

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**Poor vision can affect a child's ability to read and learn. If a vision problem goes untreated, the brain learns to accommodate the impairment, creating additional problems.**