

PARENT AND CARER SUPPORT FOR VISION AND EYE TESTS

Kindly shared by
Beth Cox (Optometrist)
David Edwards (Leicester City Vision Impairment Team)

Signs of possible vision problems can include:

- Complaining of headaches or eye pain
- Problems reading
 - *They may hold books close to their face or lose their place regularly.*
- Problems with hand-eye co-ordination
 - *They may struggle to play ball games.*
- Being unusually clumsy
- Lean too close to screens.
- Eyes not pointing in the same direction.
- Watery eyes.
- Screwing up eyes or frowning when reading.
- Eye rubbing (*except when they are tired*).
- Avoidance reading, writing or drawing.
- Behaviour or concentration problems at school.
- They don't do as well as they could/should at school.
- They complain about blurred or double vision.

Free Eye Tests

Free NHS sight tests are available at opticians for all children under 16 and for young people under 19 in full-time education.

Children can have an eyesight test at any age. They do not need to be able to read or speak.

Why do some children struggle to wear their glasses?

- It is hard for a child to learn to wear glasses when they don't know what they are for, and they have not learned to look through them
- Struggle to see the benefit
- Lack of role models
- Lack of confidence
- Not wanting to stand out
- Bullying (potential/real)
- Sensory Issues

How long does it take for children to adapt to glasses

Children will often only wear glasses if they see the benefits, but it can take approximately 18 weeks of full-time wear of glasses for the vision to improve (adaptation period).

Overview of overcoming reluctance

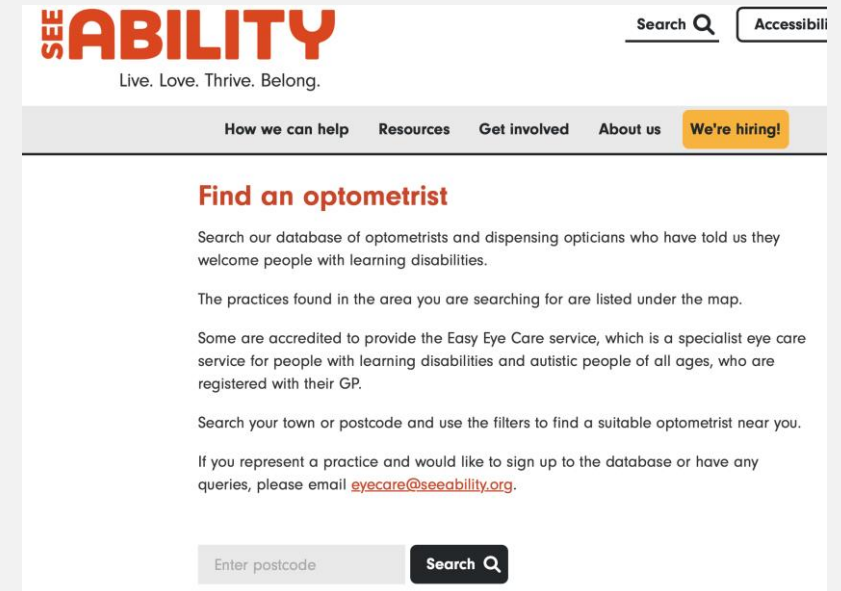
- Proceed at the child's pace.
- Start with short periods and build up.
- A short period can literally be seconds.
- Choose an activity for which the glasses benefit the child.
- Anticipate the child's tolerance and take them off before the child does.
- Eventually the child will appreciate that they can see better and will make a choice to wear them.
- Don't increase the child's aversion by making them wear them.

Play

- Have pairs to play with.
- Put them onto toys and dolls.
- Draw pictures of glasses.
- Emphasise your own glasses and how much you like wearing them – get some if you haven't got any.
- Wear glasses with dark frames to make them easier for the child to see when you are wearing them.
- Start slowly and gently – this could take a very long time.
- Get them used to the process of having things on and near their face.
- Play dressing up games with hats, crowns, scarfs, face paints, glasses.
- Use a mirror so they can see themselves.
- If the child likes water, the family may be able to play with hats and goggles when swimming, or in the bath.

HOW TO CHOOSE AN OPTICIAN FOR A CHILD WITH SEND USEFUL CONSIDERATIONS

- 1) Do they offer **longer appointment times** for children with SEND?
- 2) Can they offer appointments at a **quieter time of day**?
- 3) Can they **send photos** of their staff and pictures of the eye test?
- 4) Do they offer a **practice familiarisation** visit?
- 5) Do they have **equipment** suitable for children with SEND?
- 6) Has the optometrist (optician) had any **additional training**?
- 7) Is the practice **accessible** for wheelchairs?
- 8) Is there **parking** nearby or is it within walking distance?
- 9) Do they have **glasses frames** suitable for children?
- 10) Is the eye test **free**, covered by the NHS?



The screenshot shows the SEEABILITY website. The logo 'SEEABILITY' is in red and black, with the tagline 'Live. Love. Thrive. Belong.' below it. A search bar and 'Accessibility' link are in the top right. A navigation menu includes 'How we can help', 'Resources', 'Get involved', 'About us', and 'We're hiring!'. The main content area is titled 'Find an optometrist' and contains text about searching for optometrists who welcome people with learning disabilities. It mentions that practices found are listed under a map and that some are accredited for the Easy Eye Care service. It also provides instructions on how to search by town or postcode and how to contact the organization for more information.

SEEABILITY
Live. Love. Thrive. Belong.

Search Accessibility

How we can help Resources Get involved About us **We're hiring!**

Find an optometrist

Search our database of optometrists and dispensing opticians who have told us they welcome people with learning disabilities.

The practices found in the area you are searching for are listed under the map.

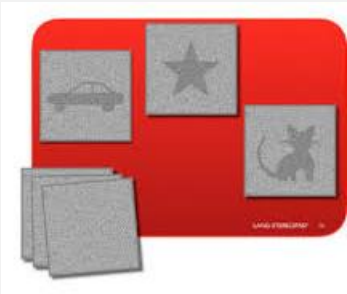
Some are accredited to provide the Easy Eye Care service, which is a specialist eye care service for people with learning disabilities and autistic people of all ages, who are registered with their GP.

Search your town or postcode and use the filters to find a suitable optometrist near you.

If you represent a practice and would like to sign up to the database or have any queries, please email eyecare@seeability.org.

Enter postcode Search

HOW DO WE TEST CHILDREN WITH SEND?



HOW TO CHOOSE GLASSES



- 1) Fitting well
- 2) Hard to break
- 3) Flexible
- 4) Curl side behind ears or sports band
- 5) Adjustable
- 6) Hard to look over top
- 7) Lightweight
- 8) Cost?

Children's glasses should only be dispensed and fitted by a qualified dispensing optician