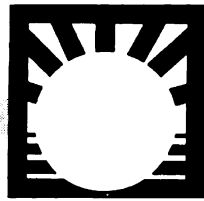




## Health Tip

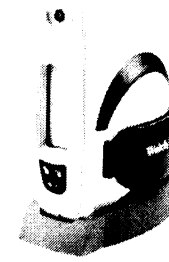


### Seeing is Believing

by Marcia Groves-Bixby, MPH

How many times have you seen preschoolers lose their balance, look closely at an object, squint, or rub their eyes? Probably more often than you can count. Before you dismiss these behaviors, consider this: these may be symptoms of visual impairment.

Because visual impairment can have a detrimental impact on a child's development, a growing number of eye doctors are now advocating that young children be screened for vision problems long before they enter school. The sooner a vision problem is detected, the more likely it can be corrected, because the child's visual system is still malleable.



### Early Detection Vision Screenings

Pediatricians and family physicians typically use Snellen visual acuity (eye) charts to screen for the presence of refractive risk factors. However, studies have shown that 25 percent of 3 year olds and 50 percent of 4 year olds can successfully complete this test.

Saving Sight Rhode Island offers early detection vision screenings statewide to preschools, elementary schools and private schools. Saving Sight Rhode Island Screeners are trained and certified to administer vision screenings using the most up to date, state of the art vision screeners; The portable SureSight Vision Screener. The screening takes less than 1 minute per child. This technology is suited to detect key risk factors for Amblyopia, a loss of visual acuity by determining the eye's optical properties (need for correction.)

Screenings are performed to detect:

**Myopia** -Is a vision condition in which near objects are seen clearly, but distant objects do not come into focus.

**Hyperopia**-Is a vision condition in which distant objects are usually seen clearly, but close ones do not come into focus.

**Astigmatism**-The condition in which vision is blurred due to the inability of the eye to focus.

**Anisometropia**- The condition in which the two eyes have an unequal refractive power.

**Strabismus**- The condition in which the eyes are not properly aligned with each other. It typically involves a lack of coordination between the extraocular muscles that prevents bringing the gaze of each eye to the same point in space and preventing proper binocular vision, which may adversely affect depth perception. Strabismus can be either a disorder of the brain coordinating the eyes or a disorder of one or more muscles.