



**A GUIDE TO SELECTING
CHILDREN'S GLASSES**

Helping your child see clearly, comfortably
and confidently

WHY CHILDREN'S EYE TESTS AND GLASSES MATTER



100 years
of Dispensing Opticians

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1926-2026

Clear vision is essential for children's learning, social development, and long-term eye health.

Many parents don't realise how important early eye exams are — and children often won't report if they can't see well.

Eye tests should be routine from ages 3–4, the child does not need to be able to read, and they are funded by the NHS, along with support towards the cost of spectacles.



A 4-year-old wearing a frame based on small adult facial features.

CHILDREN'S FACES AREN'T SMALL ADULT FACES

Children's facial features grow at different rates, especially the nose, relative eye position, ear position and head shape.

Most children's frames on the market are just **mini adult frames** — which usually **don't fit properly**.

Poorly fitting frames lead to:

- Glasses sliding down the nose
- Children looking over their lenses
- Discomfort
- Incorrect lens position → reduced vision
- Poor long-term wear and poor treatment outcomes

Properly designed children's frames improve comfort, safety, and visual outcomes.

WHAT GOOD CHILDREN'S GLASSES SHOULD DO

A properly fitted paediatric frame should:

- Sit comfortably and securely on a child's developing nose
- Keep the child's pupils centred in the lenses
- Stay in the correct position during play and everyday activities
- Be designed to match young children's wider, flatter nasal features
- Distribute weight correctly to avoid pressure and slipping



A 4-year-old wearing a properly designed children's frame.

WHY I NEED MY CHILD TO SEE A REGISTERED DISPENSING OPTICIAN

Paediatric dispensing is a **skilled clinical process** that is regulated by law in the UK.

Your dispensing optician will assess your child's:

- Pupillary distance (distance between the pupil centres)
- Nose position (crest height)
- Head width and temple width
- Lash position
- Ear position and side length

Your dispensing optician will then present a **curated selection of frames** that:

- Match your child's facial measurements
- Fit safely and comfortably
- Allow for correct lens positioning
- Support the prescribed treatment

Your child will still be able to choose their favourite from the suitable options

LENS CHOICES: WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

Your dispensing optician will recommend the safest and most suitable lens type for your child.

Safety is key

- Polycarbonate or Trivex™ lenses are recommended for children — they are lightweight and highly impact-resistant, ideal for active play and sports.

Comfort matters

- Lighter, thinner lenses help keep glasses secure and comfortable.
- Some prescriptions would benefit from specialised lens designs for the best results.

UV protection

- Children's eyes absorb more UV light than adults
- UV-protective lenses or sunglasses are strongly recommended for **all children**.
- Sunglasses must fit well to deliver the required protection



Lens coatings

- Anti-reflection coatings can reduce glare, especially for screens.
- Scratch-resistant coatings help lenses last longer (*though no lens is fully scratch-proof!*)

Hobbies and sports

- Prescription sports eyewear is available to help your child see well whilst participating safely in many sports, including swimming

HELPING YOUR CHILD WEAR THEIR GLASSES HAPPILY

It's normal for some children to take time adjusting to new glasses.

Tips for success:

- Celebrate small wins — even a few minutes of wear at first
- Link glasses on to fun times or activities
- Avoid turning glasses-wear into a battle
- Praise your child when they keep them on
- Ask teachers and carers to support positive reinforcement

A well-fitting, comfortable pair of glasses makes this process much easier.

CARING FOR CHILDREN'S GLASSES

Reinforce the instructions given to your child by the dispensing optician:

- Put glasses on and take them off with two hands
- Store them in their case
- Keep lenses clean by washing with water/lens cleaner rather than dry rubbing
- Avoid placing them lens-down on surfaces

Regular fit checks help ensure the glasses stay comfortable as your child grows.

Support from the NHS is available towards repairing/second pairs – your dispensing optician will advise accordingly.



SUMMARY FOR PARENTS

- The fit of the glasses is just as important as the prescription
- Children need specially designed frames, not scaled-down adult styles
- Comfort and good communication improve long-term wear and treatment success

If you have any concerns about your children's eyes, regardless of their age, visit an optician.

SEEK OUT A REGISTERED DISPENSING OPTICIAN – THE GLASSES SPECIALIST

Your dispensing optician is registered with the General Optical Council and specifically trained and assessed in all aspects of spectacle wear including children's vision, facial development, lens choice, and frame fitting.

We're here to support you — from the first fitting to long-term eye care for the whole family.

Find out more on the ABDO website, scan the QR code
www.abdo.org.uk



ABDO is the only professional body solely dedicated to the interests of dispensing opticians, both individually and collectively, and to the profession of dispensing optics.

Association of British Dispensing Opticians

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