

Encouraging Your Child to Wear Glasses:

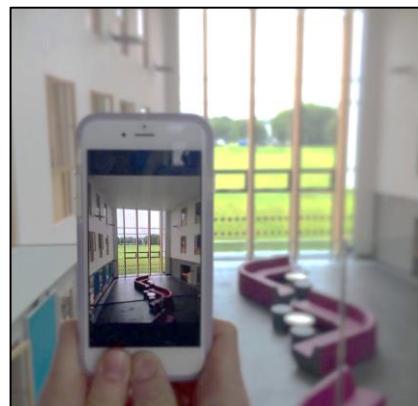
A Guide for Parents.

Why does my child need to wear glasses?

Glasses are prescribed to correct a refractive error. Refractive error can mean long- or short-sighted, with or without astigmatism.

Long-sighted means that distance vision is clearer than near vision and is caused by the eyeball being slightly too small.

Short-sighted means that near vision is clearer than distance vision. It is caused by the eyeball being slightly too large.



Astigmatism results from irregular curvature of the front of the eye and distorts vision at both distance and near.

Why won't my child wear their glasses?

There can be several reasons for a child's reluctance to wear glasses, and it is important that you consider each one.

Some common problems are:

1. The glasses are not fitting correctly which makes them uncomfortable to wear.
2. The glasses prescription (strength of the lenses) may be difficult to get used to. Seeing things differently can sometimes take a little while to get used to, even if the world seems clearer!
3. They may not like objects on or near their face
4. They may not like change.



Top tips for encouraging glasses wear

1. Make sure the glasses are as comfortable as possible

- ◆ Ensure the glasses are fitting correctly on the bridge of the nose, behind the ears and at the sides of the head. Your optometrist or optician should spend some time getting this right.
- ◆ If your child has an unusual head shape, there are brands of glasses available to accommodate for this. *Do not be tempted to settle for ill-fitting glasses as these will be uncomfortable for your child!*
- ◆ Choose lightweight frames with comfortable sides.



- ◆ Consider thinner and lighter lenses if your child has a high prescription. These may cost a little extra, but worth it if it helps your child wear their glasses.
- ◆ Think about curl sides or straps to help keep the glasses on. Sometimes these are useful to keep the glasses secure, particularly in young children and babies. However, most children may manage well without this.

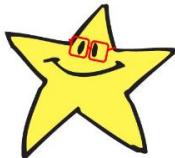


- ◆ If the glasses become loose or damaged over time (e.g. they keep slipping down your child's nose) take them, along with your child, back to your optician who will be happy to adjust them. It is important to ensure the glasses are **always** fitting correctly so that your child is looking through the correct part of the lenses and to make sure the glasses are as comfortable as possible.
- ◆ Don't worry if your child frequently breaks or loses their glasses – if they are under 16 they are entitled to free repairs or a replacement pair.



2. Think about using a reward chart.

- ◆ When your child wears their glasses for a set period of time, add a new star to the chart.
- ◆ Aim to gradually increase the time glasses are worn before receiving a reward.



3. Wear the glasses during a fun activity



- ◆ Choose an activity that your child enjoys doing with you, and one for which glasses will help, for example reading a story or watching a favourite video.
- ◆ Put the glasses on at the start of the activity (don't forget to put yours on if you need them too!) and make the activity short at first.
- ◆ If your child takes the glasses off, simply stop the activity.
- ◆ Aim to increase the length of time the glasses are worn then introduce a second 'spectacle-wearing' activity.
- ◆ Make it a 'special time' together. This way your child learns to associate wearing glasses with a pleasant experience.

4. Speak to your child's teacher or classroom assistant.

- ◆ If your child will not wear their glasses at home, then perhaps they will be happier wearing them at school.
- ◆ There may be other children in the class who wear glasses which may encourage your child to wear their glasses too.
- ◆ Your child may co-operate better with your teacher in school. Give them a spare pair of glasses for your child to wear only in school.
- ◆ Discuss the possibility of glasses wear becoming part of the child's school routine and including this as a target on their Individual Education Plan (IEP).



What do I do if my child still won't wear their glasses?

Don't worry if it takes a long time (*weeks or even months!*) before your child is happy to keep their glasses on.

Stay positive and just keep trying!

It is common for children to grow out of their reluctance to wear glasses. Once your child learns that the glasses will not harm them and gets used to the glasses they will be happy to wear them.



Finally, remember the 3 Ps:

