

# CHILDREN'S VISION AND EYE CARE: A NEEDED PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY



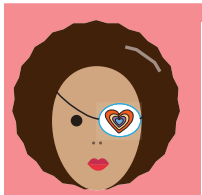
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Healthy vision contributes to a child's overall development and social, academic, and emotional well-being. Early identification of common childhood vision problems and eye diseases such as amblyopia, strabismus, and refractive errors is critical to avoid potentially lifelong vision impairments. Access to proper treatment can help children meet age-appropriate language, social, and developmental milestones and achieve readiness to learn. **However, too many children with vision disorders have unmet needs for eye care, leaving them vulnerable to negative effects on learning and development.**

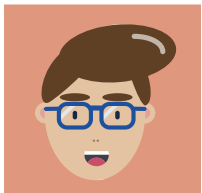
National economic costs for childhood vision disorders are \$10 billion annually. Families shoulder 45% of these expenses, and access to care through public or private vision coverage remains a challenge. There is currently no national system in place to track screenings, follow-up exams, treatment, and outcomes of care. More work is needed to build awareness of the significance of vision disorders and ensure children can access needed vision and eye care. Below is a glimpse of children's vision and eye health in Massachusetts.

## Children's Vision and Eye Care in Massachusetts

The 2016–2017 National Survey of Children's Health, which provides multi-faceted data on children's health and well-being, included the following question: "Has the child has his or her vision tested with pictures, shapes or letters ever (for children birth through 5 years) or during the past 2 years (for children from 6-17 years of age)?"



	Age 0-5 years	Age 6-11 years	Age 12-17 years	Total 0-17 years
Massachusetts	46%	85.7%	88.5%	73.9%
National	38.9%	85.5%	83%	-



	Hispanic	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Asian, non-Hispanic*	Other, non-Hispanic
Massachusetts	72.2%	75.3%	65.9%	71.9%	76.2%

\*\*Data set may be too small to determine a representative sample\*\*



If the respondent answered yes, a follow-up question was asked: "What kind of place did this child have his or her vision tested?"

\*\*National figures\*\*

	Age 0-5 years	Age 6-11 years	Age 12-17 years	Total 0-17 years
Eye doctor or eye care specialist	29%	51%	71%	55%
Pediatrician or general doctor's office	67%	46%	31%	44%
Clinic or health center	6%	5%	4%	5%
School	18%	30%	16%	22%

## Coverage and Access

	Public Health Insurance	Private Health Insurance	Public and Private Insurance	Uninsured
Massachusetts	72.1%	75.6%	66.9%	-

Vision disorders are the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading chronic condition among children.



1 IN 4  
SCHOOL AGE  
CHILDREN  
HAS A VISION  
PROBLEM.