

What to do if you think a child has a vision loss

If you have concerns that your baby or child might have problems with their vision,
please speak to your Health Visitor or Doctor for advice.

Signs that may be a cause for concern:

Birth to 6 months:

- Does not visually focus on your face or bright objects held up for them to see.
- Does not respond to bright toys unless they also make a sound.
- Does not show excitement for toys or movement and turn their head to 'see' them (eg someone walking towards them or a bright toy or flashing toy).
- 'Stills' when they hear a noise but does not turn head.
- Appears to be sensitive to bright lights (eg outside on sunny days closes eyes or turns head).

6 to 12 months:

- Does not turn eyes toward bright well contrasted toys brought towards them from the front or sides.
- Does not respond to your smiles or copy facial expressions.
- Appears unaware of own hands/feet moving across face.
- Startles if picked up or touched (when there is no sounds to warn them someone is coming).
- Does not move towards or reach for visually attractive toys, or misses when they reach eg overreaches or under reaches).
- Brings things close to face or tilts head to look at them.
- Is startled by loud noises or gets upset by loud noises because they possibly can't see what is making the noise (eg hoovers or cars going past when out in the pushchair).
- Scrunches up eyes or turns head away in bright lights or sunny weather.

12 to 24 months:

- Does not copy simple movements with hands or feet.
- Does not seem to understand facial expressions.
- Does not respond if they can't hear you (eg through a car window if you smile at them or wave to them).
- Appears to see some things but not others and is more accidental in unfamiliar places.
- Appears clumsy and bumps in to things or trails the walls with hands to get around.

Over 2 years old:

- Is slow learning to walk and move around and may hold head down rather than look around.
- Gets very close to respond to people's faces or often brings things close to view them.
- Appears to be affected by different light conditions and will say they 'can't see' or cover eyes.
- Stands or moves towards things to see them if they are far away (eg the TV or pictures).
- When things are a long way away, they struggle to respond to objects or people.