

ANSWERS: Facts About Vision in Babies and Children

1. Newborn babies do not have the ability to focus on an object in front of them.

TRUE. Newborn babies have peripheral vision (the ability to see to the sides) and in the first weeks of life gradually develop the ability to focus on an object or point in front of them.

2. At birth, babies are very sensitive to bright light.

TRUE. Their pupils remain constricted to limit the light coming into the eyes. After about two weeks, the pupils begin to enlarge and babies can see a range of shades of light and dark.

3. By 12 months, a child's ability to focus, track and perceive depth is complete.

FALSE. Actually, these aspects of vision continue to develop throughout early and middle childhood.

4. It is recommended that children receive their first vision screening before entering school.

FALSE. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends they receive vision screenings when they are newborns and between the ages of three and three-and-a-half. Upon entering school, or whenever a problem is suspected, children's eyes should be screened again for visual acuity and alignment.

5. Eye injuries are the leading causes of blindness in children in the U.S.

TRUE. Childhood eye injuries can also increase a person's risk of developing eye disease later in life. Children should wear protective eye wear for racket sports, hockey, baseball and basketball, which are among the sports with the highest rate of eye injuries.

6. There are very few genetically determined vision problems that occur among children.

FALSE. There are many conditions that are genetically determined, so it's important to research your family history of childhood eye disease. The most common vision problems among children and adults that are genetically determined include [strabismus](#) (crossed-eye), [amblyopia](#) (lazy eye) and refraction errors such as myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness) and

astigmatism. If you find history of these conditions, ensure your child is seen by a pediatric ophthalmologist.

7. Babies can be born with cataracts.

TRUE. Children can be born with congenital cataracts, which may cause severe and permanent vision loss. A particularly cloudy cataract will block the formation of a clear view onto the retina of the eye. Without a clear image on the retina, the brain will not obtain good visual information of the world.