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How to Choose Eyeglasses for your Child

To get your glasses or your child's glasses, you will need a glasses prescription. This is given to you by Dr. Longmuir. This will be taken to an optical shop so that an optician can fit you or your child with glasses. Fitting glasses on children can be difficult and time consuming. It is always important to find an optical shop that is experienced in fitting children. Our office has spoken to several shops in the area and found the following:

Donelson Optical Service is located at 2211 Jacksons Downs and is near the office. Dean, the optician, owns this private shop and he is able to fit children and babies. He does not participate in vision plans. The cost will be cash or credit card and the cost is usually around 200 dollars depending on what you request.

WalMart optical is a good choice for BlueCare and TennCare plans. Some Walmarts carry children's frames and is comfortable fitting children as young as age 2. I would call your local Walmart and discuss if they have frames for your child. You will NOT need an appointment to get the glasses prescription as Dr. Longmuir will be giving this to you. It is only the optical shop that needs to take TennCare.

LensCrafters in Mt. Juliet is comfortable fitting children age 6 and up, and has experience with children's bifocals. They have limited selection but can get young children (i.e. school children a good pair of glasses). Also, Vanderbilt Lions Eye Center has glasses for babies and children. They do not participate in all vision plans. They are currently not taking Medicaid. You may want to call to see if that has changed. Children with Down syndrome sometimes like "Specs4us." They can be purchased online and the lenses can be placed in them at a Walmart or Cosco optical shop.

You can also search on the Miraflex website, as they can be searched by zip code. Any location that uses this frame (or Solo Bambini) should be able to fit babies and toddlers as well.

School age children are usually able to wear regular frames. They can go to Lenscrafters but any child less than 5 may have difficulty with fit at a Lenscrafters as they are more set up for adults and older children.

The most important aspect of children's glasses is the fit. With a poor fit they may not be tolerated, or may not improve the vision as much as desired. Here are some things to notice during the fitting:

- The frames should not touch the cheeks or eye lashes.

- Eyes should look centered when looking straight at the child

- The frame should be adjusted/changed to fit the child.

- Do not make your own adjustments to the frame, as many frames are easily broken.

Other hints:

It often takes 1-2 weeks for a child to adjust to first-time glasses wear, or to a prescription change. If there are concerns about the glasses, bring the glasses to the office so they can be evaluated.

For active children, straps are helpful.

Ask about warranties and/or lens replacement costs. If the warranty costs less or about the same as the fee to replace a single lens, it is probably worth the price.

If the prescription is necessary for your child's function and alignment, a back-up pair is a good idea. Sometimes, it can take 2 weeks to get a pair of glasses.