

Top Ten Eyewear Tips *for Parents*

Thanks to fictional character Harry Potter, kids wearing glasses are now cool! If your child requires prescription eyewear, here are some tips for selecting eyewear that will make it both fun and functional.

- 1. Lenses:** Discuss with an optical professional the best lenses for the prescription. Polycarbonate lenses are generally the best for children. These lenses are the most impact resistant and are lighter weight than most plastic lenses. Parents should always avoid glass lenses. Although all glass lenses are tempered, the glass may still shatter when broken and creates a hazard to the eye. Glass lenses are also heavier than plastic or polycarbonate lenses. An anti-reflective lens is also recommended. Anti-reflective lenses help to transmit the light versus reflect it; allowing for less eyestrain from over head light, computer work, watching TV, etc. Some anti-reflective lenses are also scratch resistant. Talk to your optician for more details.
- 2. Size and Fit:** The frame should have a comfortable temple length and bridge size. The bridge is the part of the eyewear frame that connects both eye rims over the nose. The bridge size allows the nosepads of metal frames to rest comfortably on the nose at a proper distance from the inner corner of the eye. Because most children do not have fully developed or prominent noses, they may require a special nosepad sling to keep the frame in place on the nose. Temples, the arms that extend from the front of the eyewear, should be a length that rests comfortably on the ear. They can be adjusted to get a comfortable fit. For younger or active children, cable temples provide a flexible cable that wraps over the ear to keep the temples secured so that the eyewear stays in position on the face.
- 3. Frame Material:** To provide the most durability, eyewear should be made of quality metals such as nickel, silver, monel, stainless steel, or titanium. Titanium, special nickel-free metal alloys, and most plastic frames are also hypoallergenic. Plastic eyewear frames are a durable alternative but can be more difficult to repair.
- 4. Sensitivity to Nickel:** Some children are sensitive to nickel. If your child shows sensitivity to nickel, try titanium, nickel-free, or plastic eyewear.
- 5. Spring Hinges:** Spring hinges provide flexibility, allowing the temples to flex outward, away from the face without causing any damage to the face or the eyewear frame. Spring hinges are safer in that the eyewear comes off the face easily in the event of a fall or accident.
- 6. Strength and Durability:** Choose a substantial metal or plastic frame with spring hinges and extra soldering strength at the bridge and temples to ensure the eyewear can withstand a child's active lifestyle. The extra soldering strength at these areas (where metal meets metal) will help prevent breakage.
- 7. Nosepads:** Look for silicone nosepads because they do not slip.
- 8. Appearance:** Today's eyewear for children offers a wide selection of eye shapes, colors, and decorative treatments. Make sure your child is happy with how the eyewear looks and feels, and communicates this to your optical professional.
- 9. Eyewear Case:** Make sure your child's eyewear comes with a hard case. Teaching your child a good habit, to put his or her eyewear in the case when not being worn, will prevent the eyewear from being scratched or broken.
- 10. Care and Cleaning:** Parents need to show children how to maintain and clean their eyewear. The frame and lenses should be cleaned with a non-abrasive cloth using a mild detergent. Paper products are not recommended. As part of regular maintenance you should bring your child and their eyewear in once every three months for straightening and adjusting. Also have the optical professional tighten the screws on the frame to ensure the life of the eyewear.