

Children's Participation in Eye Health and the Promotion of Good Vision



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Introduction

- This handbook includes **Topics** and **Activity Sessions** to conduct with 10-14 year olds. These are organised around twenty **key messages**.
- Some sessions include **A Good Question** for children to ask each other and/or their families after the session.
- Each session has 1-3 messages for the children to memorise and practice between sessions.
- Some sessions have an additional activity that allows the content of this session to 'come alive' outside the classroom.
- Adapt activities so that they are a good fit for the ages and stages of the children and where they live, go to school and work.
- Each session is designed to take around 40 minutes, but you can adapt it to fit the time your group has. The pace depends on the age, stage and experience of the children.
- Reorganise the sessions depending on events, needs or as the curriculum demands. For example, if you have an Eye Screening event, you may want to use the topic on *Eye Testing*.
- Games can be used in longer sessions or as part of a club session when there is more time.
- If there is a specific behaviour that the programme seeks to change or develop, then consider using the **Children's Ideas Chart** or conduct a workshop. For example, you may want to investigate why some children do not wish to wear their spectacles. In *Section Three* we set out how you can run a workshop with children to find out why some children may not want to wear spectacles and prepare action plans. You will need to adapt the activities to suit your context.

Notes

Adapting the Messages

The **Ten Topics** and **Twenty Messages** have been carefully developed by eye health experts. If changes to the wording of any messages are required, or you wish to translate the messages, be sure to have eye health experts check the new messages.

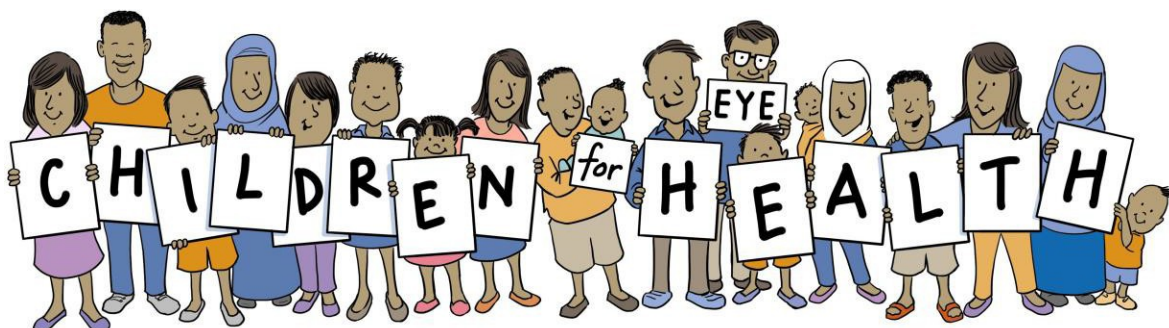
Scripts

In *Section Three* there are three scripts that can be used when introducing the topic of *Eye Health and Vision*. These scripts are for guidance only. You know your community best, so please adapt the scripts for your own class, school or community. As the focus of the eye health activities are for 10-14 year old children, the scripts are aimed at this age group and their families.

Background Reading

We suggest that all educators involved in this work, read the *Reference Section for Educators on Eye Health* in this handbook or read the booklet published by the Hesperian Foundation, '*Problems with the Eyes and Seeing*' upon which this reference booklet is based at

www.childrenforhealth.org/ProblemsWithEyeHealth





Topic One: How to Keep Eyes Healthy

1	Five Actions for Good Eye Health	Keep eyes healthy by: 1. Keeping hands, face and eyes clean and free from flies; 2. Eating food rich in Vitamin A like eggs and milk, yellow and orange vegetables & fruits and leafy greens; 3. Being immunised; 4. Getting help for itchy, red or infected eyes; 5. walking carefully when holding sharp objects.
2	Face and Eyes are Clean and Bright	Wash your hands properly before touching the T-zone on your face (eyes, nose and mouth), as this is where germs enter the body. Avoid touching the T-zone when you can.
3	Balanced Diet	To have a balanced healthy diet eat different foods of a variety of kinds. Go, Grow and Glow for strong bodies and healthy eyes.
4	Breastfeeding	For the best eye health, babies need just breast milk for the first six months. Breast milk contains Vitamin A.
5	Vitamin A	Vitamin A pills can be given to young children once or twice a year (as prescribed by a medical professional). It helps protect their eyes.
6	Immunisation	Millions of parents all over the world take their children to be immunised to make sure they are safe, strong and protected from diseases like measles that can harm the eyes.



Topic Two: Understanding Our Eyes

7	Parts of an Eye	Our eyes are shaped like a small ball. The front part of the eye has a coloured circle: the iris and a smaller black circle: the pupil.
8	What does Each Part Do?	The pupil lets in light, like a window, so that we can see. Structures inside the eye focus light so that we can see clearly. The eyelid helps to protect the eye and keep out light when we sleep. Tears carried by the eyelid across the eye, wash away dirt and help keep our eyes clean. That is why we blink. Eyelashes help to keep out dust, dirt and flies.



Topic Three: Eye Health Personnel

9	Eye Health Personnel	There are several different kinds of eye health personnel. Some treat eye diseases, others test eyes and find ways to help a person see better.
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Topic Four: Signs of Vision Problems in School-age Children

10	Signs of Vision Problems in School-age Children	Children who cannot see clearly may need an eye test. They may hold a reading book too close to their faces, squeeze their eyelids together, seem shy, don't want to play or copy class notes from another book close by.
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Topic Five: Signs of Vision Problems in Young Children

11	Signs of Vision Problems in Young Children	Some children are born with small white dots in their eyes. This causes blindness and can be treated.
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Topic Six: Have an Eye Health Check

12	Eye Health Checks	Eye health checks find out why a person cannot see clearly and show eye health personnel what to do to improve vision.
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Topic Seven: Improving Vision

13	How Vision is Improved	Spectacles are the simplest way to correct short- and long-sight and help people see clearly.
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Topic Eight: Supporting Children with Vision Problems

14	Adults and Children with Vision Problems are Healthy	Healthy children can have vision problems. As they get older, most healthy adults need spectacles or contact lenses to improve their vision.
15	Spectacles, a Vital Friend	Wearing spectacles to improve vision is vital for children and adults with vision problems to lead a normal happy life. Friends and family must encourage them.
16	Listen and Support	When children first get spectacles there may be many reasons why they do not like wearing them. Friends, family and teachers must help to support them and listen to their worries.



Topic Nine: Seek Help for Injured Eyes

17	Seek Help for Injured Eyes	If an eye is hurt in an accident, cover the eye with something clean and get help from a health worker fast.
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Topic Ten: Eye Infections

18	Signs of Conjunctivitis	When an eye looks pink or red, this might be conjunctivitis. The eye feels itchy, uncomfortable and sticky. The eyelids may be stuck together after sleeping. Get help after a few days if it's not better.
19	Stop Eye Infections Spreading	Conjunctivitis spreads easily to other people so a child with it must not touch others without washing their hands properly. Do not share cloths used to clean infected eyes or share towels or bedding until the eyes are better.
20	Take Care with Ointments	If the eye has white or yellow sticky discharge, the germs might be bacteria. Antibiotic ointment must be used as instructed by a health worker.

Please Note: Adapt these planning steps to meet the specific context in which the programme is taking place. The following is for guidance only – many of the topics in this handbook feature in many country's science or health science curriculum. However, the content and activities might be limited to one or two lessons and linked to just one- or two-year groups only.

Planning a School Programme

1. The staff and headteacher discuss how to fit or strengthen *Eye Health and Vision* sessions in the timetable. Here are some options:
 - The sessions (or a selection of sessions) can be integrated across the school and become a part of the regular curriculum. This means that all children learn about *Eye Health and Vision* in their lessons.
 - The teacher(s) responsible for the curriculum or pedagogy at the school can look for opportunities to include extra content and activities for all year groups.
 - As well as using curriculum time, extra activities on *Eye Health and Vision* can become a part of the life of the school. For example, using school assemblies or events when the parents and children gather and participate in community campaigns.
 - Many schools have *School Health Clubs*, and if so, members of the club can learn about the *Eye Health and Vision* activities and then share messages and activities to other children. This is a popular model.

In all cases, be sure that those children learning about *Eye Health and Vision* spread the content and activities to others. Then, ALL the children in the school can share messages and activities with their family and community.
2. Read the reference booklet in the back of this handbook.
3. Read through and adapt the prepared scripts for:
 - *School assembly*
 - *Session in a classroom*
 - *Community session*
4. Practice and discuss the methods you will use in the first session, such as *Think, Pair, Share*. Think about and plan the sessions.
5. Read through this handbook to get an overview of the activities.
6. Select the session you are going to use first.
7. Prepare the first session in your notebook, step-by-step. Be realistic about the timing. Do not to do too much in the first session.



It is useful to do this activity early on in the programme as it can be used several times, plus it's fun to do! The activity collects children's ideas, experiences and opinions on eye health and vision issues and what they think they can do.

Please Note: The *Children's Ideas Chart* activity can take longer than one session.

Materials

Where possible, poster-size paper and marker pens for each group. Note that the charts can be made on a blackboard or by drawing it in the sand.

Activity 1: Points Down Energiser

1. Explain to the children that there are seven points of the body that can touch the floor in this game – two hands, two elbows, two knees, one forehead.
2. Ask children to form groups. Start with groups of three.
3. Call a number up to seven and each group works out how to touch the floor with that number of 'points'.
4. Ask children to form a new group or a different size, e.g. pairs or 4s and again call out a number up to seven.

Children's Ideas Chart

Preparation

Using sheets of poster paper and pens draw out the chart on the board or a poster paper. You will need one for every five or six children in your session.

1. Ask the children to form groups of five or six.
2. Ask the groups to discuss this question, but not write anything down, ***what eye health and vision problems do we know about among our friends or in our communities?***
3. After five minutes, ask the whole group to give answers.
4. Ask the children to spend five more minutes discussing and then select 3-5 of these reasons and write them in the first column (see example on the next page).
5. Then ask the children to discuss how serious each problem is and how common. Decide on a points system. (For example, the one below uses 5/5 = most serious/most common and 1/1 = least serious/least common.)
6. Then ask children to discuss how much they can do about each of these problems and talk about examples.
7. Total the points in the last columns and discuss the outcome:
 - *What have you chosen as the most important problems?*
 - *Are these easy problems for children to do something about? Why/Why not?*
8. Ask two groups to share their charts.
9. Find a way to look at all the charts. Then if time allows create another chart with the whole group combining the best ideas.

Please Note:

- This tool is a useful way to find out what matters most to the children. It captures their ideas about what problems most affect them and what they think they can do.
- The scores do not matter as much as the discussion.
- Do this activity slowly and carefully the first time. Make sure the children understand what to do. The second time they do it, it will be easier. It can be used many times.
- From the results of this chart, children can decide: which topic or issue is most important; what they think children can do; and what they need to do to get all the children helping.
- It is a useful tool to use when planning a campaign.
- It helps children feel ownership and develops their critical and creative thinking skills and other life skills.

Here are examples of the chart with some ideas and action steps.

CHILDREN’S IDEAS CHART				
<i>What eye health and vision problems do we know about among our friends, in our school or our families?</i>				
Reasons	How Serious	How Common	How much can children do + examples	Importance to us

CHILDREN'S IDEAS CHART				
Why do children who need spectacles find it hard to wear them?				
Reasons	How Serious	How Common	How much can children do + examples	Importance to us
Family members do not like children to wear spectacles.	4	4	(3) The school can organise a meeting for parents where the parents are encouraged to ask questions. The parents can be told more about vision testing, eye screening and eye health. Children can make presentations to parents in the form of songs, drama or posters to help raise awareness of the importance of wearing spectacles for children who have vision problems.	11
Children who need to wear spectacles, do not like how they look and do not want to wear them.	4	5	(5) In the class, in the school and as part of an eye health campaign, children who wear spectacles and children who need to wear them can have discussions about what is good and what is difficult about wearing spectacles and keeping them safe. Children who wear spectacles can have a chance to talk publicly to their classmates or in a school assembly about the experience of wearing spectacles, keeping them safe and, if relevant, what it is like to be called names.	14
The family is afraid of the cost of spectacles now and later.	3	5	(2) Children can find out the actual costs and, if there is a cost, if spectacles can be provided for free or sponsored in their community. In a small group, they can visit families who are affected and make sure the facts are known.	10

CHILDREN'S IDEAS CHART				
Why do children get eye diseases, and what can children do?				
Reasons	How Serious	How Common	How much can children do + examples	Importance to us
Babies are not exclusively breastfed for six months.	5	4	<p>(3) Children can find out the reasons why some mothers do not breastfeed. They can ask directly or find out from health personnel.</p> <p>Using songs and drama, children can pass on the message that exclusive breastfeeding is important for the first six months.</p> <p>Children can help their mothers so that exclusive breastfeeding can happen.</p>	12
Children are not immunised.	4	5	<p>(4) Children can do a survey in the community to find out which children or babies have not been immunised and the reasons for this. Ensure children's safety and design the survey carefully!</p> <p>Using songs and drama, children can raise awareness.</p> <p>Children can speak with health personnel and ask if and when they can help to raise awareness.</p>	13
We do not wash and dry our hands properly.	5	5	<p>(4) Children can find out the reasons why people do not use soap. Using songs and drama, children can raise awareness. They can find out how much soap costs. Children can make tippy taps at home and school. Children can demonstrate good practice and help others do the same – especially younger children and children of the same age.</p>	14

This is a fun way for children to learn the ten *Eye Health and Vision* topics.

As the programme develops, you can use this same activity to help them memorise and repeat the messages in a supported group way. Not all the children are able to remember all ten topics after the first session, but if you make it something you do at the start of each session each time you do the memory line; they will learn the topics better. When they have learnt all the topics, then you can use this method to get the group to memorise the messages too!

Preparation

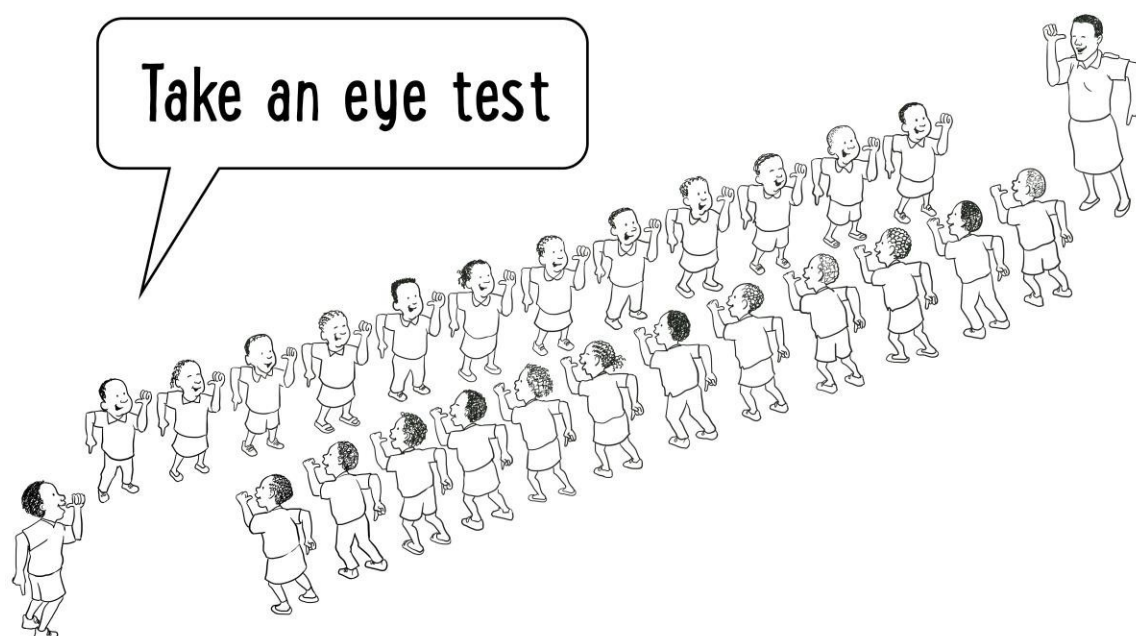
Print (or write) out this list of ten topics so you can give one topic to each child in your group.



<i>How to Keep Eyes Healthy</i>	<i>How to Keep Eyes Healthy</i>
<i>Understanding Our Eyes</i>	<i>Understanding Our Eyes</i>
<i>Eye Health Personnel</i>	<i>Eye Health Personnel</i>
<i>Signs of Vision Problems in School Children</i>	<i>Signs of Vision Problems in School Children</i>
<i>Signs of Vision Problems in Young Children</i>	<i>Signs of Vision Problems in Young Children</i>
<i>Take an Eye Test</i>	<i>Take an Eye Test</i>
<i>Improving Vision</i>	<i>Improving Vision</i>
<i>Supporting those with Vision Problems</i>	<i>Supporting those with Vision Problems</i>
<i>Seek Help for Injured Eyes</i>	<i>Seek Help for Injured Eyes</i>
<i>Eye Infections</i>	<i>Eye Infections</i>

1. Give each child a piece of paper with one topic to memorise. If there are more than 20 students in the group, repeat topics as needed.
2. Ask them to find another child with the same topic and form pairs or threes (if there is an uneven number of children).
3. Ask them to form a circle with the pairs standing side-by-side.
4. Ask each pair to take turns coming into the circle and saying their topic out loud. The whole group repeats it after them.
5. Tell the pairs that it is easier to remember the topics when actions are added.
6. Ask children to create actions to go with their topic and practice saying the words with the actions.

7. Demonstrate an action for Topic 1, *Understanding Our Eyes*. Point to the head when you say the word, *Understanding*. Point to the eyes with both hands when you say the phrase, *Our Eyes*.
8. Ask children to create actions to go with their topic and practice saying the words with the actions.
9. Repeat the group work where each pair comes into the middle, and then the group repeats it.
10. Ask the group to stand in a line with the pairs facing each other.
11. Rearrange the line so that the 'Topics' are arranged in the correct order.
12. Ask the first pair to say the topic with the action and then the whole group repeats.
13. Ask the second pair to repeat the first topic and then add their topic.
14. The whole group repeats Topics One and Two.
15. Continue down the line until the whole group has repeated all the Topics with the actions.



Preparation

Print (or write) out the list of Topics giving one per each child in the group for the memory line activity (as found on page 8).

Steps

- 1. Do the **Memory Line** activity.
- 2. **Passing on Messages** activity.
- Explain that part of this programme is to pass on health messages to other children and to family and friends.
- Tell the children this short story

When Esther came home from school, she saw her older brother, Victor sitting by himself with his head in his hands. Esther was worried, as she knew it was the first day Victor has been to school wearing his spectacles. She had learned a special message that day:

When children first get spectacles there may be many reasons why they do not like them. Friends, family and teachers must help to support them and listen to their worries.

A bit later and so he could hear, Esther started to sing a song about how spectacles are a 'friend' to everyone in the family and at school as they help a child see better. She had learned it in class. She was scared to talk to Victor directly, but she hoped he would listen to her song. As she finished the song, her brother stood up and smiled at her. Later that day, Esther asked Victor if he was OK, and he said, "I feel better because of your singing."

- In the group discuss
 - *What could have happened to Victor at school that day?*
 - *Why was Esther worried?*
 - *Why does Esther find it difficult to go up and talk to Victor?*
 - *How do you think she helped Victor?*
 - *Do you know children who share the same problem as Victor? What happened?*
- Ask the children to form small groups and make up a drama showing a difficulty a child might face when passing an eye health message to others (younger child, friend, sibling, adult). For example:
 - *Refusing to listen.*
 - *Saying, 'I don't have time to listen to you.'*
 - *Teasing.*
 - *Not believing the child's message.*
- The group watches the role-plays and after each one discusses:
 - The specific problems of passing on eye health and other health messages to older children and adult family members.
 - Ideas on how to do this directly and indirectly. For example: using songs, stories or pictures and share these with older family members at a mealtime or another time when the family gathers.
 - Ideas on how messages can be shared in small (or even large) groups at school, community meetings or in the media.

Campaign days are used to spread ideas to people in the community and raise awareness. It may be at a time when children have an eye screening event at school. It is good to involve the whole school in the campaign.

Preparing and Planning Community Outreach

To help with planning, you can use tools like:

- **The Children's Ideas Chart:**
This tool collects children's ideas on problems linked to a topic plus what children themselves feel they can do to help plus the support they think they will need from adults.
- **Conduct a Survey:**
If you are not sure what the problems and challenges might be, children can find out more and conduct a survey. Design a survey carefully using open questions!
- **Ask Community Leaders for their Support:**
They can meet with children to participate in the planning, introduce the children at the beginning of the *Campaign Day* and thank them at the end so that the community is seen to learn from and support the programme.



Activities

Preparing the Campaign

- Children distribute leaflets to their parents and in the community.
- Designated groups of children tour the community with loudspeakers, wearing a uniform, announcing the topic and messages and invite everyone to the Campaign Day location.
- Children hang banners at key locations.
- Community and religious leaders announce the *Campaign Day* topic and messages.



- Children prepare the area for activities.
- Community campaign activity e.g. eye screening, hygiene demonstrations, immunisations and giving out Vitamin A supplements.

On the Campaign Day

- Opening words and introduction to the day's goal and the main messages of the campaign.
- Speeches and messages of support regarding the campaign and the benefits.
- Poems, stories, songs on the topic/messages.
- Role-plays showing families overcoming challenges.
- Explanation of banners and posters messages.
- Government representatives speak about the programme.
- Speeches, ideas, opinions, concerns and comments on their community's health and expectations for community engagement.
- Speech about the children – what the children are learning, how they are working, how to join, success stories, etc.
- Closing words.

Message One

Keep eyes healthy by: 1. Keeping hands, face and eyes clean and free from flies; 2. Eating food rich in Vitamin A like eggs and milk, yellow and orange vegetables and fruits and leafy greens; 3. Being immunised; 4. Getting help for itchy, red or infected eyes; 5. Walking carefully when holding sharp objects.



Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **How to Keep Eyes Healthy**.
- Children can describe *Facial Hygiene* and why this is important.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask at home to discuss changes or developments in good health habits in the community where they live.

Preparation

Most of the time in this session will go to learning and memorising the *Five Actions* message. Write the message onto the blackboard as a list of five phases (see below).

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Explain the **Five Actions for Good Eye Health**.
3. Divide the group into five and give each group one of the five phrases to learn and practice.
4. Go around the group as they practice their phrases – suggesting actions to go with each phrase. The actions should be simple and easy to understand. They only need to illustrate one part of the phrase. For example, the second and longest phrase could be the simple action of putting the fingers together and making a gesture to and from the mouth.
5. Ask the children to stand in a circle, but standing next to the others in their five groups (this activity can be done outside).
6. Ask each group to say their phrase out loud with the action starting with phrase 1.
7. This time ask the group to repeat the phrase after each group.
8. Repeat this but this time add the numbers and ask the children to use their fingers to gesture the phrases 1-5 as they say the numbers.
9. Ask the children in pairs or threes to practice all five phrases and repeat 2-3 times.
10. In the whole group repeat the whole message.

Reflection Circle

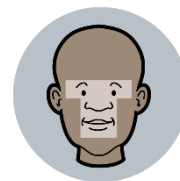
In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know it to share with classmates, friends and family.

Message Two

Wash your hands properly before touching the T-zone on your face (eyes, nose and mouth), as this is where germs enter the body. Avoid touching the T-zone when you can.



Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Face and Eyes are Clean and Bright**.
- Children can describe *Facial Hygiene* and why this is important.
- Children have conducted a dialogue that demonstrates accurate knowledge about the importance of keeping the face clean and other good health habits.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask at home to discuss changes or developments in good health habits in the community where they live.

Materials and Preparation

4 x sheets of A4 paper and something that attaches paper to a chair or wall like sticky tape, masking tape or Blu-tack.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Explain that the T-zone is across the top of your face and down your nose. Ask the children to do an action showing their T-zone. Ensure they do not touch their faces as they do this!
3. Repeat in chorus the **Face and Eyes are Clean and Bright** message. Add actions to this message to make it more memorable, but make sure that children do not touch their faces when they are doing the actions.
4. In pairs or three the children practice the message.
5. Introduce the topic by talking about germs, hygiene, the importance of using soap to remove germs and the dangers of using a dirty cloth to dry the hands or face. You may want to use the SAFE poster to show how facial cleanliness is an important part of defeating the eye disease trachoma (see the *Other Resources* section in this handbook).
6. **Vote with your Feet Game**

Please Note: this method makes a quiz active and fun. When the children want to answer **Yes** they move to one side of the room. When they want to answer **No** they move to the other side. You can also give the option of moving to the middle of the room if they **Don't Know**. Once the children have moved, ask them to explain or give reasons. When you have talked through all the answers, repeat the activity.

- *Do you know what facial hygiene means? (Yes/No)*
 - *Is washing your hands facial hygiene? (No)*
 - *Is washing the face and eyes facial hygiene? (Yes)*
 - *Is keeping flies away from your eyes part of facial hygiene? (Yes)*
 - *Will washing your face and hands with water make them clean? (No) – Why?*
 - *Is soap needed to practice good facial hygiene? (Yes) – Why?*
 - *Do you need soap to wash your face and hands? (Yes) – Why?*
 - *Should you wash your face every day? (Yes) – Why?*
7. If time allows, do another 'round' of the *Vote with Your Feet* game. It's also fun to do it silently.



Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know it to share with classmates, friends and family. Encourage children to ask this **Good Question** in their families:

Why is it that people in our community do not use soap to wash their hands and face?



Extension Activities: Leaky Tin and Tippy Tap

A leaky tin is a simple type of 'tippy tap'. See page 16 for instructions on how to make a tippy tap. A leaky tin or a tippy tap is helpful for those who live in a place that has little water.

Leaky Tin

1. Find a small empty tin or plastic cup.
2. Make a hole near the bottom.
3. Hang it from a branch or a nail in a fence or wall.
4. Once or twice a day the mother or teacher pours one cup of water into the tin.
5. Children wash faces in the stream of water leaking through the hole.
6. Plant a tree below the tin. If the young plant suffers from drought, the children's eyes may suffer from trachoma or another eye infection.

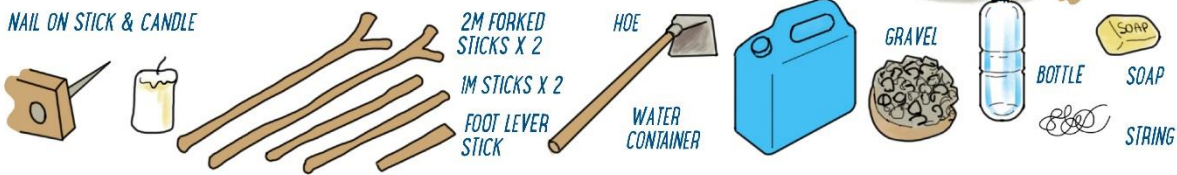
Tippy Tap Dialogue

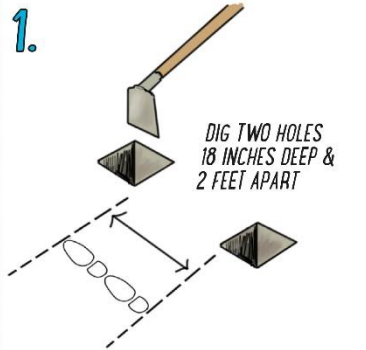
Please Note: This can be done in pairs, or if there is an uneven number of children, one child can be the person who does not wash their hands (they should still join the dialogue).

1. Adapt or tell the children the following scenario: *Two people are chatting and then see a person going to the latrine and coming out and not using the tippy tap that is beside it. The women talk about the bad hygiene habits of the other person and what this means for her health.*
2. Divide the children into pairs or threes and ask them to develop the dialogue. Let them do this on their own. This can be done with puppets too.
3. Select one or two examples of the dialogues to watch and discuss.

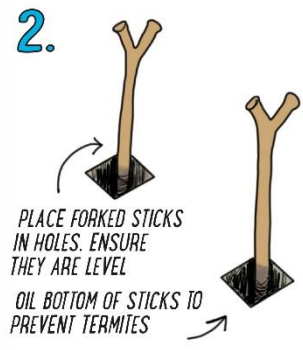
How to help an adult build a TIPPY TAP

What you need




1. 

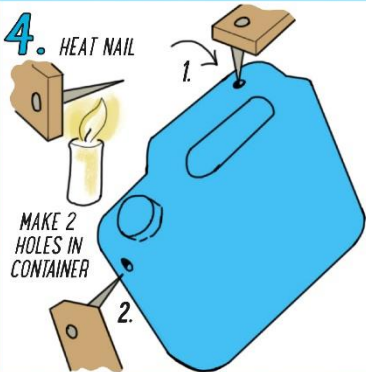
DIG TWO HOLES 18 INCHES DEEP & 2 FEET APART

2. 


PLACE FORKED STICKS IN HOLES. ENSURE THEY ARE LEVEL
OIL BOTTOM OF STICKS TO PREVENT TERMITES

3. 


FILL HOLES WITH SOIL & GRAVEL
PACK TIGHTLY

4. 

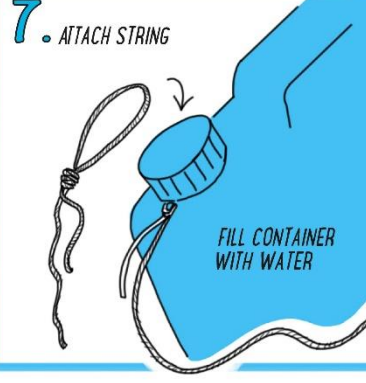
4. HEAT NAIL
MAKE 2 HOLES IN CONTAINER

5. 


5. CUT UP PIECES OF SOAP & PUT IN BOTTLE
FILL BOTTLE WITH WATER

6. 

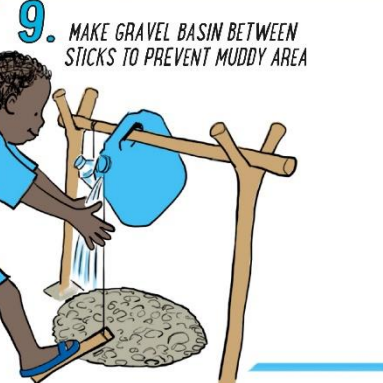
6. HANG CONTAINER & SOAP BOTTLE ON CROSS STICK & SUPPORT

7. 

7. ATTACH STRING
FILL CONTAINER WITH WATER

8. 

8. ATTACH OTHER END OF STRING TO FOOT LEVER STICK

9. 

9. MAKE GRAVEL BASIN BETWEEN STICKS TO PREVENT MUDDY AREA

Message Three

To have a balanced, healthy diet eat different foods of a variety of kinds. Go, Grow and Glow for strong bodies and healthy eyes.



Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Balanced Diet**.
- Children can describe what foods make up a *Balanced Diet* and why it is vital for good eye health.
- Children have conducted a dialogue that demonstrates accurate knowledge about the importance of a Balanced Diet and what it is.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a good question to ask at home about eating habits in the community where they live.

Preparation: Be familiar with the quiz questions and adapt them, if necessary. To increase participation, write (or print) out the questions and let the children interview each other. You may want to replace *Grow, Glow and Glow* with the food groups more commonly used in the curriculum for example: *Energy Foods, Protecting Foods and Body Building Foods*.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Learn the **Balanced Diet** message with actions too.
3. Activity: Using the *Think-Pair-Share Method*, ask children to think about this question and then discuss it in pairs and in a group: **‘When someone says ‘Balanced Diet’, what do you think about?’**
4. Quiz: Ask the whole group these questions then check their answers, giving them the correct answer when needed. Repeat the exercise and ask the children to test each other in pairs or small groups.

Balanced Diet Means
Good Food
Enough Food
Go, Grow and Glow
Eating and Snacking
Colourful Food
Breastfeeding
Happy and Healthy
Vitamins, Minerals, Protein, Carbohydrate

Question	Answer
What is a balanced diet?	<i>A variety of food in the right amounts.</i>
What happens when people do not have a balanced diet?	<i>The body becomes weak and they catch diseases easily. They become malnourished.</i>
What three food groups do we need to have a balanced diet?	<i>GO, GROW, and GLOW.</i>
What does a child with a balanced diet look like and feel like?	<i>Healthy, active and growing well.</i>
Give two examples of food from each of the three food groups.	<i>GO: rice and maize; GROW: meat and beans; GLOW: avocados and bananas.</i>
Give three reasons why children do not get a balanced diet?	<i>People do not know what a balanced diet is, people do not grow or harvest or buy enough good food, people spend their money on food that is not good (junk/fast food), people do not have money to buy good food.</i>
Do boys and girls need equal amounts of food?	<i>Yes, boys and girls have similar needs for food. Larger children or children who are very active might need more GO food.</i>
Do some foods belong in only one food group? Give examples!	<i>No, most foods belong in more than one food group but it is MOSTLY IN one e.g. maize and potatoes are mostly GO foods although they can help us GLOW and GROW just a little. There are few foods that are WHOLE foods some examples are avocados, coconuts, nuts and seeds.</i>

Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know it to share with classmates, friends and family. Encourage children to ask this **Good Question** in their families:

Why is it that some children in our community do not have a balanced diet?

Extension Activities

Tell the children this story:

A teacher teaches the message about Balanced Diet to a group of children and they practice it. After school they go home and they teach the message to a group of friends. Neighbours see them and ask them what they are doing. The children tell them. The children go back to the school and tell the teacher the story of sharing the message with the other children and the neighbours. The teacher rewards them with a green ribbon. Everyone repeats the message and sings the song.

- Divide the children into groups of 5 or 6 and ask them to take it in turns to retell the story, or develop the story as a role-play. Let them do this on their own.
- Select one or two examples of the role-plays to watch and discuss.

Follow-on: Children can perform role-plays at school or in the community and make other role-plays on this topic with their friends.

Tell the children this story:

A sister meets her brother and asks, 'How are you?' Her brother says that he is feeling tired and he has had many small illnesses and that he does not know how to get his energy back. He concludes by telling his sister how well she seems. Sister asks what he is eating and drinking in a day. Continue the dialogue in which it becomes clear that the person feeling well is having a much healthier, balanced diet that includes a variety of colourful, fresh and natural food. Encourage the children to make this dialogue funny and with good messages about a Balanced Diet!

- Divide the children into pairs and ask them to develop the dialogue. Let them do this on their own.
- Select one or two examples of the dialogues to watch and discuss.

Follow-on: After checking that the facts are correct in the dialogue, encourage children to perform it at home or in the community. They can also teach other children the facts to use in the dialogues so that they can work out a dialogue too.

Message Four

For the best eye health babies need just breast milk for the first 6 months. Breast milk contains Vitamin A.



- Children will know and feel able to share a message on **Breastfeeding**.
- Children can describe the good things about *Breastfeeding* and the problems with bottle-feeding.
- Children have conducted a dialogue that demonstrates accurate knowledge about the importance of Breastfeeding.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask at home to discuss reasons why mothers find it hard to breastfeed, especially in the first 6 months.

Preparation: Think of two local names for *Mother A* and *Mother B* and use these when telling the story.

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Learn the **Breastfeeding** message with actions too.
3. **Activity: The Mother’s Dialogue**
 - Using this table, explain some of the key facts about breastfeeding.

Right	Wrong
Colostrum is the best milk for new born babies.	<i>The first breastmilk that is thick, sticky and yellow (colostrum) must be thrown away.</i>
Breast milk has the right mix of food and water for the first six months of a baby’s life. The baby’s thirst should be quenched with breast milk only for 6 months.	<i>Extra water must be given to baby on hot days.</i>
A breastfeeding mother should rest and eat well.	<i>She must carry on with her work and continue to be very active.</i>
Everything the mother eats and drinks can have an effect on the milk. Tea and alcohol drunk by the mother can affect a baby’s stomach.	<i>Strong tea and alcohol (beer) will make her milk and the baby’s body strong.</i>
If a baby has diarrhoea breastfeed as much as possible.	<i>Do not give fluids to a baby with diarrhoea.</i>
Vitamin A is in breastmilk.	<i>Vitamin A can only be taken in pills.</i>

- Tell the children this story:

Mother A is breastfeeding her six-week old baby. She is discussing breastfeeding with *Mother B* who has decided to stop breastfeeding and bottle-feed instead. *Mother B* tells *Mother A* lots of wrong information (see examples above). *Mother A* has to persuade her that her beliefs are mistaken.

- Divide the children into pairs and ask them to develop the role-play dialogue as *Mother A* and *Mother B*. Let them do this on their own. (This dialogue can be done with puppets to help ‘acting’ as the over- and under-weight babies.)
- Select one or two examples of the role-plays to watch and discuss.
- Ask children to think about what they can do to help promote breastfeeding. Here are some ideas:
 - *Encourage breastfeeding mothers to rest and eat good food.*
 - *Put on a play that tells how baby got diarrhoea from bottle-feeding, and present it to the neighbours.*
 - *Find out what the health technicians and the national campaigns are telling mothers.*
 - *Find out if there is any information in school textbooks which is not accurate (e.g. chapters on breastfeeding in the old versions of their natural science text books!)*
 - *Find out the costs of using powdered milk per week or month and why it can easily give diseases.*
 - *Find out if mothers continue breastfeeding their babies when the child has diarrhoea.*



Reflection Activity

- Ask the children to get into three circles.
- Ask them to think of everything they have learned about breastfeeding.
- Ask them to share it with the two children sitting on either side of them.
- One-by-one the children should stand in the middle of the circle and say one thing that they have learnt.
- Tell the children to add to and not repeat what others say. Encourage them to help each other. If they find this hard, bring them back together and go over some facts. Then ask the children to quiz each other in pairs and repeat the activity in three circles.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know the message to share it with classmates, friends and family. Encourage children to ask this **Good Question** in their families.

Why is it that babies in some families are not breastfed for six months?

Extension Activity

After checking that the facts are correct, encourage children to perform the *Mother A* and *Mother B* role-play at home or in the community. They can also teach other children the facts to use in the dialogues so that they can work out a dialogue too.

Message Five

Vitamin A pills can be given to young children once or twice a year (as prescribed by a medical professional). It helps protect their eyes.

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Vitamin A**.
- Children can describe what *Vitamin A* is and why it is important for eye health.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask at home to discuss how to make sure everyone gets enough Vitamin A, especially younger siblings.

Materials and Preparation: Prepare white paper plates or cut circles of white paper, one for each child (or pair of children). Have coloured pencils or crayons. Ask a health worker to tell you if there is a *Vitamin A Supplementation Programme* in the school's community and find out more about it.



Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Learn the **Vitamin A** message with actions too.
3. **Activity: The Rainbow Plate**
 - In pairs or threes ask children to discuss what they ate in the last two days. It doesn't matter if they cannot remember exact quantities. Ask them to think about what they were served.
 - Ask each group to make drawings of the food in their notebook, on paper or on the white paper plates and then label their drawings. The food items can be either in a cooked or raw form!
 - Ask each child to make a tick beside each of the foods that they ate during the week.
 - Each group holds up their drawing and one member describes their results.
 - Show the children the picture of a rainbow from this book. Explain that...

A good diet is one that includes lots of natural coloured fruit and vegetables. Each week we should be able to say "I ate a rainbow this week!" This is not to say that white or brown coloured foods are bad for us (egg white, fish and chicken, garlic, potatoes etc.) only that we need to include the colours too.

The colours in the fruit and vegetables contain MICRONUTRIENTS. Micro = small & NUTRIENT = something we need to live. Vitamin A is one of many important micronutrients that keep our body strong and our eyes healthy. When babies have breast milk, although the milk is not colourful, the micronutrients are in the milk, but it's important that the mother is eating a good diet.

The yellow milk that comes for a few days after a baby is born has MANY micronutrients inside it. It is called 'colostrum'. It's the most important food for babies to have after they are born.

- In the same pairs or group, ask children to draw other locally available fruit and vegetables that can be added easily to their diet (this is often seasonal and can change during the year).
- If relevant to your context, add that *Vitamin A Supplementation* is sometimes given to babies or young children to boost their eye health.
- In the same pairs or group, ask children to add locally available fruit and vegetables to their drawings. Especially those that are yellow, red and orange that they know that can be added easily to their diet. (This is often seasonal so can change during the year.)

Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know the message to share it with classmates, friends and family. Encourage children to ask this **Good Question** in their families.

*Why is it that children in some families do not eat Vitamin A rich food?
What can we do?*



Message Six

Millions of parents all over the world take their children to be immunised to make sure they are safe, strong and protected from diseases like measles that can harm the eyes.



Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Immunisation**.
- Children can describe five or more important facts about *Immunisation* and one of these should be that a measles vaccine protects a child's eye health.
- Children have been involved in the telling of a story, making a speech or writing a letter that demonstrates accurate knowledge about the importance of immunisation.
- Children have planned a question they can ask at family level to raise awareness about the need for immunisation.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Teach and repeat the **Immunisation** message adding actions.
3. **Activity: Story telling**
 - Tell the children this story and ask them to practice telling it and developing it in pairs or threes.

Peter lives in a big city. His family always eats lots of rice and some meat. Peter never eats green vegetables or yellow fruits or vegetables. He starts to find it hard to see properly in the evening. He has too little vitamin A in his body.

His sister, who is three-years-old, catches measles. Neither Peter nor his sister have been immunised. A friend, who is a teacher, comes to visit the family to help them. She asks Peter's mother what the children eat. When the teacher hears that the children do not eat vegetables and fruit, she advises their mother to improve their diet and to quickly take the children to the clinic for immunisation.

After adding more nutritious foods to their diets, Peter and gets stronger and the teacher ask him to tell his class the story. He advises his classmates to eat plenty of colourful, natural foods and get immunised to save their eyesight and prevent suffering from diseases.

- Select one or two groups to tell their stories and discuss what the story teaches us about immunisation for eye health.

Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know the message to share it with classmates, friends and family.



Extension Activity

- In pairs or threes, children can imagine they are ten years older. They write a letter to their parents, from their older selves, thanking them for their immunisations and all the things they did for their health.
- Remind the children to imagine the things they want to do and how important it is to be healthy and protect their eye health and how immunisation is an important part of that.
- Children read out the letters and the whole group discusses the letters.

Follow-on: Children can share the letters with their parents and friends. They can help to lead this activity at school. The letter can also become a text for a speech made at a school or community event.



Messages Seven & Eight

Our eyes are shaped like a small ball. The front part of the eye has a coloured circle: the iris and a smaller black circle: the pupil.

The pupil lets in light, like a window, so that we can see. Structures inside the eye focus light so that we can see clearly. The eyelid helps to protect the eye and keep out light when we sleep.

Tears carried by the eyelid across the eye, wash away dirt and help keep our eyes clean.

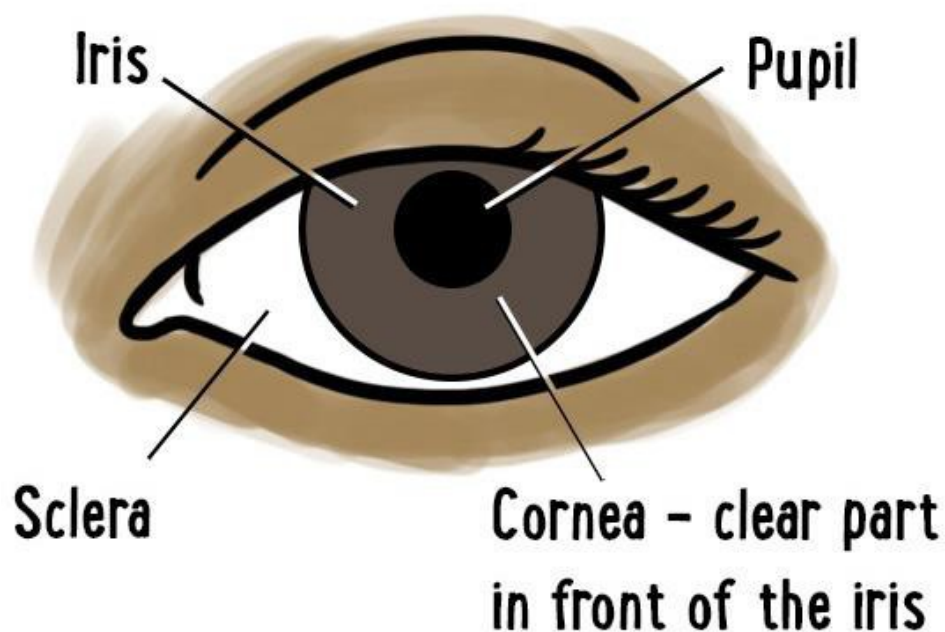
That is why we blink. Eyelashes help to keep out dust, dirt and flies.

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the two messages on **Understanding Eyes**.
- Children can name the main parts of the eye and describe *how it functions* in simple language.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask at home to learn how well their family can see.

Preparation

- Write out the two messages on the blackboard or give the children the messages on printed slips of paper.
- Draw the eye onto the blackboard and give children a printed copy of the eye or ask them to look at a digital version.



Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Ask the children to repeat the two messages several times using actions to show the different parts of the eye as they do so. As with the T zone activity, ensure the children do not touch their own or others eyes as this can spread germs!
3. In pairs or threes, look at the picture of the eye on the board, on the printed paper or the digital version.
4. Take it in turns to describe the picture to each other and to 'name the parts'.
5. Repeat this without looking at a drawing.
6. Using a blank piece of paper, ask the children to create a new drawing of the eye together and label the parts.
7. Ask the children to exchange their drawing with another pair/three.
8. Go through the answers. For each correctly labelled part, ask the children to score the eye pictures one mark!
9. Using a hands up method find out how many children got:
 - full marks
 - full marks minus one; or
 - full marks minus two.

If there are a lot of children who got less than 'full marks minus two', then repeat the activity at the next session.

10. Ask the children to take it in turns to look at each other's eyes and describe the parts and then describe the uses of the parts (without touching).
11. Conclude the session with by saying the 'Action Messages' together.

Closing Activity

Encourage children to ask this **Good Question** in their families. It is worth noting that any family members over the age of 40 might be able to see clearly in the distance, but not up close (i.e. to read a book or thread a needle).

Can you see clearly? What do/would people in your family do if they cannot see clearly?

Message Nine

There are several different kinds of eye health personnel. Some treat eye diseases, others test eyes and find ways to help a person see better.

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Eye Health Personnel**.
- Children know what each *type of eye health workers* does and who is responsible for eye health and vision in their community.
- Children have reflected on the session.

Preparation: Print out, or have ready, the picture of Eye Health Personnel to show the children.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Repeat the message in chorus. You may need to help the children pronounce the more difficult words. Use pair work to practice saying the three types of eye health workers. Add actions to this message to make it more memorable.
3. In pairs or threes, children practice the message. In the whole group say the message out loud with actions. Here are some suggestions:
 - **Optician** – make circle 'spectacles' around the eyes with the thumb and index finger (the finger next to the thumb). Start the action by holding the arms out and bring the circle shape slowly in to fit around your eyes as you say the word OPTICIAN – as if the action looks like fitting spectacles. An Optician is someone who organises and fits the right spectacles.
 - **Ophthalmologist** – make two lines from the back of your neck down to the chest with the index fingers as if you are making the shape of a stethoscope as you say the word OPHTHALMOLOGIST. The reason for this is that the Ophthalmologist is an Eye Doctor.
 - **Optometrist** – make an E shape with the middle three fingers of both hands touching the thumb and little fingers in front on each hand. Put both 'E' shapes in front of both eyes and then move the hands away together as you say, OPTOMETRIST. An Optometrist is someone who checks vision and eye health.



Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know the message to share it with classmates, friends and family.

Message Ten

Children who cannot see clearly may need an eye test. They may hold a reading book too close to their faces, squeeze their eyelids together, seem shy, don't want to play or copy class notes from another book close by.

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Signs of Vision Problems in School-age Children**.
- Children can describe several *signs of vision problems in school-age children*.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to find out if anyone in their family has had an eye test and how they knew they needed one.

Preparation

If you have a child in your class who wears spectacles or has vision problems, speak to this child (or children) before the class. Children can help with the session by explaining how they found out that they needed an eye test. If they feel confident, they can speak themselves, or they can tell the teachers to tell their story for them. Other children may be able to tell stories about their friends or siblings.

If you have time to do the 'counting fingers test' in the extension activity, then draw two lines in the classroom along a wall. Draw one line one meter from the wall and the other three meters from this line. This activity can also be done outside.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Repeat the message in chorus. Add actions to this message to make it more memorable. In pairs or threes, children practice the message. In the whole group say the message out loud with actions.
3. Ask what the signs of poor vision might be (refer to the message). Explain:

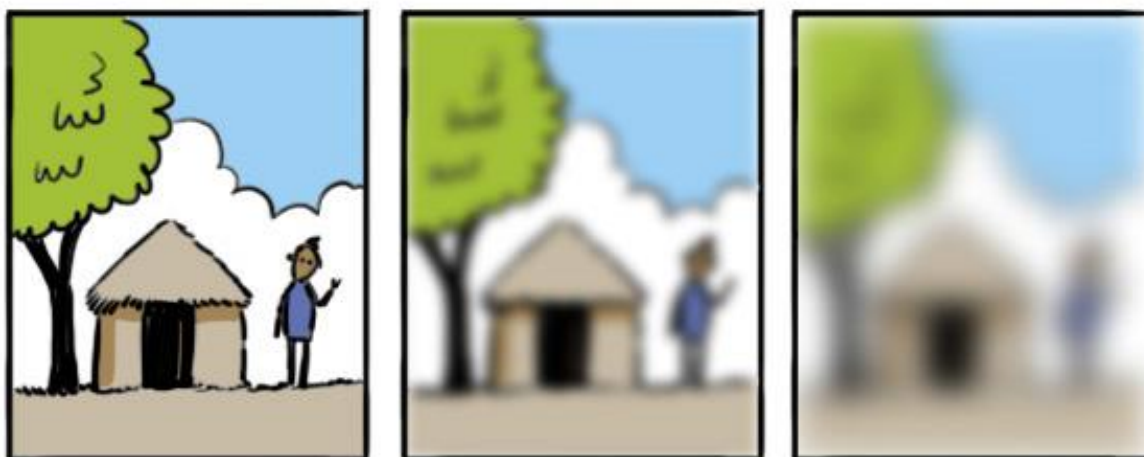
Children who are short-sighted can seem shy and quiet. They might have to sit close to the board or squint their eyes to try to see the board. They may not seem to enjoy playing games outside. They might squeeze their eyes together when they are trying to see something or ask to copy notes from their friend. They might say they get headaches a lot.

4. Ask all the children to put a hand over one eye and check that they can see clearly. Then put a hand over the other eye and check that they can see as clearly from that eye. Explain:

Sometimes, the vision problem is in only one eye, and the vision problem is only discovered when one eye is covered.

5. Show the children the three versions of picture on the following page:
 1. Where the image is sharp;
 2. Where the picture is a little out of focus; and
 3. When the picture is very out of focus.
6. Explain:

As they get older, most people will begin to have vision problems. Some children have vision problems when they are young. For everyone, their vision problems are different, but this picture can give you an idea of what it can be like when it's a little blurred and then when it's very blurred.



6. Ask the group to discuss these questions:
 - *What do you think it feels like if you cannot see clearly?*
 - *What do you think it is like when you wear spectacles and then you can see clearly?*
 - *What do you find difficult to do?*
7. If there are children in the class who wear spectacles and who want to tell their story, this is a good time for them to do this.
8. Optional activity: **Counting Fingers Test**
 - Get into pairs.
 - One child stands on the line closest to the wall. The other stands three meters away (five to ten steps).
 - The child closest to the wall holds up two or three of their fingers.
 - Their partner tells them how many fingers they can see.
 - Try again with one or four fingers.
 - Make note of the names of children who get this wrong.
 - Children can do this survey with family and friends at home.

Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know it to share with classmates, friends and family. Ask these **Good Questions** in their families:

Has anyone in our family had an eye test?

(If yes) What were the signs they needed an eye test?

Message 11

*Some children are born with small white dots in their eyes.
This causes blindness and can be treated.*

Learning Objectives

- Children know and feel able to share the message on **Signs of Vision Problems in Young Children**.
- Children can spot *signs in young children who might have vision problems* like cataracts.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask at home to discuss the signs of vision problems in young children.

Preparation

- Find out if there is someone in the children's families that have suffered from cataracts. Let them know that in this session, you will be talking about the signs of cataracts in very young children and what can be done to help them. If there is someone in the school community who has experience of cataracts (either they have had a cataract operation themselves, or they know someone who has) invite them to join this lesson and to speak about their experience.
- Make sure that the group has some understanding of the parts of the eye, especially the pupil, which should be black. *Topic Two* is about this.

Materials

A small piece of thin white paper, for example, sheets of toilet paper, one per person.

Steps:

1. Revise the *Parts of the Eye* Topic.
2. Distribute the sheets of white paper. Ask the group: *What is it like to have a cataract?*
3. Ask the children to hold up the paper to one eye and look through it.
4. Ask: *What can you see?* Explain:

This is what the world looks like for a person who has a cataract. This is because the black part (pupil) becomes cloudy and does not allow enough light to come into the eye. An operation can help to clean the cloudiness so that the person can see clearly again.

It is like removing the paper from in front of your eyes. The cloudy lens is removed from the eye. In some operations, a new lens is put in the eye. If a lens is not put into the eye, the person is given spectacles to wear. Not all babies and young children who have cataracts have a white spot, but they can still have cataracts or other vision problems.

By four months old, most babies will start to look around or track movement. Both eyes should be looking in the same direction. Check that the baby is doing this, and if not, the baby needs to be checked by a health worker.

5. Ask: *What are the three signs that a baby or young child has vision problems?*
(Answer in chorus)
 1. A WHITE OR CLOUDY DOT
 2. NOT TRACKING OR LOOKING AROUND
 3. EYES THAT DO NOT LOOK IN THE SAME DIRECTION



6. Ask the children to repeat this individually to themselves several times and then practice asking each other the question.
7. Tell the children this story (or adapt a version of it):

One day, when Abu was four years old, he was playing in the courtyard. It was a sunny day. His mother noticed that he was bumping into things. When she threw a ball to him, he could not catch it. Abu was unhappy. His mother hugged him and wiped the tears off her son's face. While Abu was gazing at his mother's eyes, his mother noticed that the pupil in one of Abu's eyes was not black, but white. Abu's mother thought it was due to crying, and she tried to wipe it away, but the white colour did not go away.

Without waiting for her husband to return from the market, she took her son to the Health Clinic. The health worker told her that Abu had a cataract and that an operation would cure him, but they must take him to the hospital. When she told her husband, he could not believe it, "I thought that only old people suffer from cataract!". They were afraid, but they agreed to the operation. It was this operation that gave Abu his sight. He can now catch a ball and laughs and plays with his friends.

8. If time allows ask the children to retell this story or to act it out.

Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know it to share with classmates, friends and family. Encourage the children to tell their friends and family the signs of a cataract and that they should go to the clinic or health centre to get it checked.

Message 12

Eye checks find out why a person cannot see clearly and show eye health personnel what to do to improve vision.

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message, **Eye Health Check**.
- Children can describe why having an *Eye Health Check* is important.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question they can ask a family what happened during an eye test.

Preparation

There may be children with spectacles in the group. If so, speak to them before this session and tell them what you are going to talk about in the class. If they feel confident, invite them to tell their classmates about their experiences and answer questions. Do not force any child to speak.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Repeat in chorus the **Eye Health Check** message. Add actions to this message to make it more memorable.
3. In pairs or threes, children practice the message.
4. Explain the following, capital words should be said by the children:

*For many people, their eyes do not work well, which means they do not see clearly. Some find it hard to see things close to them, but can see things far away very clearly. Others find it hard to see things far away. These are called **refractive errors**. What are they called? REFRACTIVE ERRORS*

For some, this happens in childhood and for others, this happens as they get older.

*People can easily be helped to see clearly. They wear **lenses**. What are they called? LENSES. These are fitted to spectacles, or contact lenses that are worn on the eye. What are they called? SPECTACLES OR CONTACT LENSES*

*When it is discovered that someone cannot see clearly, they have their eyes **checked**. This can be at school or in a clinic.*

After checks, the person is told what refractive error they have. Eyes can have different refractive errors. Each person is different; each person is told the 'lenses' they need for each eye. Then each person selects the spectacle frames that they like.

The lenses are put into the frames, and the person can wear them and see more clearly. When a person wears the spectacles for the first time, it's important to have the spectacles fitted properly so that the frame sits comfortably on the face and do not fall off!

Eyes change over time, so it's important for people with spectacles to go back to the optician once a year (or when they feel their spectacles are not working well). Sometimes one eye will change more than the other eye.

If a person's eyes have the same refractive error once they find out what the error is, they can buy spectacles from a shop. When the lenses needed for each eye are different, they have to get custom-made spectacles.



- 5. In pairs or threes, ask children to come up with one question about eye checks.
- 6. Ask each pair or three to join another group to ask each other the questions and to see if they can answer them.
- 7. Ask the children to write down their question and put it in a box.
- 8. Select one question. Ask the children to answer it.

Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

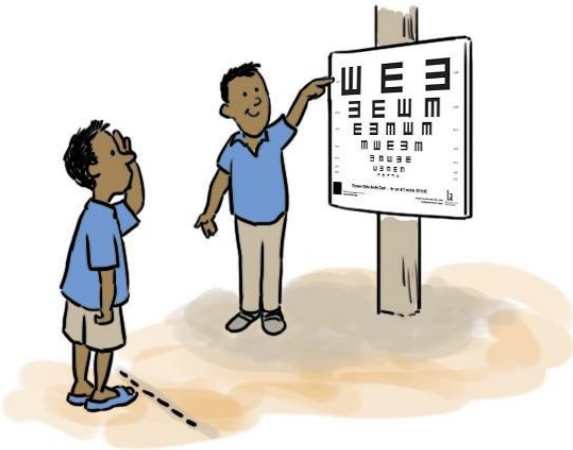
Repeat the message together and ask those that know the message to share it with classmates, friends and family. Ask the **Good Question** of a family member or friend who has had their eyes checked:

What happened at the eye check?

Extension Activity: Children checking children’s vision

Please note that this activity does not replace the need for an eye health worker to check children's eyes. The E Chart (page 67) is for teachers and children to use to be aware of one part of an eye test. An eye health worker has important knowledge and special training and the checks they make will find out about a child's eye sight and other eye health problems. After the checks, the eye health worker will tell the parents exactly what to do next. Print the E Chart in the appendix of the booklet. Make sure when you print it the black box in the lower right corner measures 2 cm x 2 cm.

- Attach the E Chart to a wall or tree.
- Measure a 3-meter (10-foot) distance from the tree or wall. Mark the spot.
- Ask the child to stand on the mark and cover their left eye.
- Point to the first E. Ask the child to point in the same direction as the E. Repeat with the other Es.
- The child should now cover their right eye.
- Repeat the test.
- Write down the names of any children who did not get all the directions of the E right. This means that they may need to have another check conducted by a trained teacher or eye health worker.



Message 13

Spectacles are the simplest way to correct short- and long-sight and help people see clearly.

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Improving Vision**.
- Children can describe *Improving Vision* why this is important.
- Children have reflected on the session.

Preparation

If working in small groups, prepare several copies of the short story and the three questions that go with it.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Repeat the message in chorus. Add actions to this message to make it more memorable. In pairs or threes children practice the message. In the whole group say the message out loud with actions.
3. In the whole group or in smaller groups, ask a child to read this story out loud (or a locally adapted version of it).

My father makes shoes. Last year he stopped making and mending shoes because he could not see to thread the needle or do the small stitches. We were unhappy because daddy was not earning enough money to buy the things we needed, like school books and clothes.

At last his friend, Mr Kuma said, "My friend, you should go to the eye clinic to get spectacles." My father did not agree. "I am not yet old and I have always seen well. Spectacles will make my eyes weaker."

But from that day he noticed that there were people his age wearing spectacles, like Mr Zuma in the post office and Mrs Kumalo who made clothes.

He decided to have his eyes checked at the eye clinic. He returned with a pair of spectacles, looking very proud and happy. He has gone back to mending shoes and we are happy now.

Questions:

- *How did the father's vision affect the family and why?*
- *Why was the father not willing to go to the clinic? Was he right?*
- *What helped him decide that he should go to the clinic?*
- *What question would you like to ask him?*
- *What do you feel about children who have to wear spectacles?*

4. **Explain:** *Some children are not completely blind, but they cannot see very well, even with spectacles. They suffer from low vision. There are many things that can help someone with low vision.*
 - *Mobility (having ways to move about with low vision)*
 - *Magnification (increasing the size of objects or text)*
 - *Lighting (people see better where there is good light)*

5. In pairs, think about where you live – both inside your house and outside your house. Talk to each other about:
- How would you help someone with low vision who is coming to visit your home?
 - What could you do before and during their visit to make them feel more comfortable?



Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know it to share with classmates, friends and family.

Messages 14-16

Healthy children can have vision problems. As they get older, most healthy adults need spectacles or contact lenses to improve their vision.

Wearing spectacles to improve vision is vital for children and adults with vision problems to lead a normal happy life. Friends and family must encourage them.

When children first get spectacles there may be many reasons why they do not like wearing them. Friends, family and teachers must help to support them and listen to their worries.

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the three messages on **Supporting Children with Vision Problems**.
- Children can describe how they can *Support Children with Vision Problems* and why this is important.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask at home about children wearing spectacles.

Preparation

- You might like to run a workshop using *Eye Health and Vision Children's Ideas Chart* model to explore the reasons why some children find it hard to wear their spectacles. The reasons could be linked to their actions or the actions of others.
- Children in the school who wear spectacles can help you with this session. Speak to them before the class and find out if they would be happy to tell stories of how they have been supported and if they have had to overcome teasing or unkindness because of their spectacles and what helped them.
- Write out all three messages onto the blackboard or print them out on paper and have one set of three messages per child.
- Print out or show the children the images in this section. Ask: *What do these pictures teach us?*

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Repeat in chorus the **three** messages. Add actions to the messages to make them easier to remember.
3. In pairs or threes ask the children to practice the messages.
4. Explain that some family members may not like their children to wear spectacles. Sometimes children get called names when they wear spectacles. But being able to see clearly is vital. Children who are not able to see well do not do so well at school and may not be able to take part in sports. Their friends can help a lot by accepting and supporting children who need to wear spectacles.
5. Read this story. Ask children to listen carefully so they can retell it. You can change the names of the main characters.

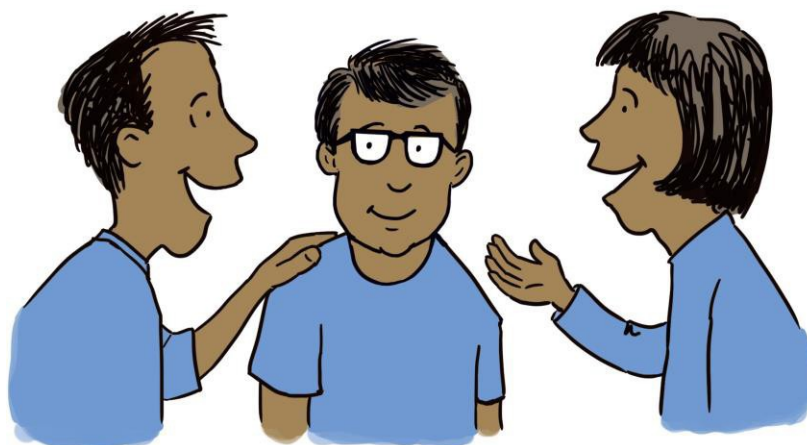
My name is Jamillah. My best friend since I was a child is Simrah. I remember when we were about ten years old, Simrah always failed the tests. She seemed unhappy at school. When she read a book, she held it very close to her face, the book almost touched her nose. When there was something to copy from the blackboard, she copied it from my book.

One day, the school held eye tests. Some of the teachers were trained to do this. They tested all of our eyes. They tested Simrah and told her that she had a problem with her vision and that she would be able to see normally again with a pair of spectacles. She said, "but my father will not allow me to wear spectacles, it will bring shame on the family, no one will agree to marry a girl with spectacles!"

The teacher was very kind. She spoke to Simrah's parents and helped change their minds and soon Simrah was able to go to the clinic and have her eyes tested again there. Simrah did need spectacles!

When Simrah wore her spectacles, everything improved. She could read clearly and she started to do well at school. The teacher praised her, "smart Simrah in her spectacles!" At home she could help her mother with preparing the food because now she could see. She could play outside with her friends.

6. Ask the children to retell the story in a small group. They can help each other to remember it. You may need to repeat the story another time.
7. Ask the children: *Why was Simrah afraid?*
8. At this point, if there are children in your class who wear spectacles – ask them how they feel about this story.
9. Ask the group:
 - *In this class/school do you think that children who wear spectacles feel afraid of what others think? Why? Why not?*
 - *What are the best ways we can support children who find it hard to see or who wear spectacles?*



Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message together and ask those that know the message to share it with classmates, friends and family. Ask the **Good Questions** in their families:

What do you think about children wearing spectacles?

Extension Activity

1. Ask the children to divide up into pairs or threes.
2. Ask them to role-play a discussion between friends. One or more of the friends wear spectacles.
Use these questions or add your own:
 - What has been good about wearing spectacles?
 - What has been difficult?
 - Who has supported them the most and how does this happened?
 - What is the best way other children can help?
3. The pairs or small groups can practice their role-play 2-3 times.
4. Then select one or two of the role-plays to watch and discuss.

Follow-on

Children can perform the role-plays in the playground or at home.



Message 17

If an eye is hurt in an accident, cover the eye with something clean and get help from a health worker fast.



Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Seek Help for Injured Eyes**.
- Children can describe three or more dangers to eyes and why *preventing injuries* to the eyes is important.
- Children can describe how to wash dust from an eye.
- Children have reflected on the session.
- Children have planned a question to ask about eye injuries.

Preparation

- Large pieces of poster papers and coloured pencils if possible (pencil and notebooks can also be used).
- Write (or print) out the eight phrases.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Repeat the message in chorus. Add actions to this message to make it more memorable.
3. In pairs or threes children practice the message and then the group repeats it.
4. Explain that: *Eyes can be injured by:*
 - *Smoke from cooking.*
 - *Sun, dust, and wind.*
 - *Chemicals from factories or liquids used to clean things around the house.*
 - *Chemicals in water used for washing (from factories or farming).*
 - *Human or animal waste (urine or faeces) that is in rivers or lakes.*
 - *Throwing sticks, stones or sharp objects.*
 - *Poisonous plants or insects.*
 - *Dust or flies in the face from riding a bike or motorbike.*
 - *Using eyedrops that belong to someone else.*

5. Divide the whole group into eight groups and give each of the groups one of eight phrases above to learn.
6. Give each group a piece of paper (or use note books).
7. Ask each child in each group to make drawings of their phrase.
8. Ask the group to repeat their drawings on a large piece of paper.
9. Ask the whole group to stand in a circle and display their drawings.
10. Ask the whole group to repeat the eight phrases in turn.
11. Conclude the session by asking the children what they would do if they injured their eyes or if they were with a friend who injured their eye. (*Seek medical help.*) Remind the children what they would need to do.

Reflection Circle

In a circle, the children say in turn what they learned and enjoyed about this session.

Closing Activity

Repeat the message and the children to share it with classmates, friends and family. Ask the **Good Questions** in their families:

Do you know anyone who injured their eye? What happened?

Extension Activities

How to remove dirt or an eyelash from the eye

If dust or dirt gets into an eye, have the person close their eyes and move their eyes around from side-to-side and up and down. Then, while you hold their eyelid open, have them look up and down again. This makes the eye produce tears that can wash out the dirt.

- Another way of making tears is to gently rub the GOOD eye. This produces tears in both eyes. Do not rub the sore eye.
- Or try to remove the bit of dirt or eyelash with unclean water. Use only clean, safe water, not any other liquid. Hold the eye open while rinsing with water from a cup or the child can open the eye and blink into a full cup of water or lie down and tilt their head back while you pour water so it runs from the inside (near the nose) to the outside of the eye (near the ear).
- If you can see it, the bit of dirt can be gently removed with the corner of damp, clean cloth, tissue, or cotton swab.
- When dirt is under the upper eyelid, you may only be able to see it by turning the upper eyelid over a cotton swab. Ask the person to look down while you do this.

If you cannot get the dirt out easily send them for medical help.

Follow-on

- Ask the children to do a survey of their home and community observing and listing potential hazards to the eyes, especially for young children.
- Ask children to collect short stories of people who injured their eyes:

Zara had a little sister called Ayanna. One day Ayanna was playing in the kitchen. When no one was watching her, she took the top from a bottle of cleaning liquid and some of the liquid splashed onto her eye and she started screaming. Zara fetched her mother quickly and together they rinsed Ayanna's eyes with fresh water for 20 minutes. Then Ayanna had a hug from mother and sister and she was playing again soon after.

Messages 18-20

Signs of Conjunctivitis

When an eye looks pink or red, this might be conjunctivitis. The eye feels itchy, uncomfortable and sticky. The eyelids may be stuck together after sleeping. Get help after a few days if it's not better.

Stop Eye Infections Spreading

Conjunctivitis spreads easily to other people so a child with it must not touch others without washing their hands properly. Do not share cloths used to clean infected eyes or share towels or bedding until the eyes are better.

Take care with ointments

*If the eye has white or yellow sticky discharge, the germs might be bacteria. Antibiotic ointment is needed and **MUST** be used as instructed by a health worker.*

Learning Objectives

- Children will know and feel able to share the message on **Eye Infections**.
- Children can describe the most common eye infection, conjunctivitis.
- Children have reflected on the session.

Steps

1. Introductory activities, e.g. an icebreaker, game or *The Memory Line*.
2. Repeat the message in chorus. Add actions to this message to make it more memorable.
3. In pairs or threes the children practice the message and then the group repeats it.
4. Explain:

Often called "pink eye," conjunctivitis is a common eye disease, especially in children. It can affect one or both eyes. The conjunctiva is a transparent layer that lines the inner eyelid and covers the white part of the eye.

Some forms of conjunctivitis can easily spread from person-to-person. Usually it's not too serious, but it can become a more serious problem.

Viruses, allergies or bacteria can cause conjunctivitis. Plus, it can develop due to pollen and smoke or other things that contact and irritate the eyes.

Pink eye feels itchy or hot and uncomfortable. Tears can form and the eyelids can become thicker (swollen). There can be a yellow and sticky discharge and the eyelids can stick together after sleeping. People with conjunctivitis avoid bright light.

To prevent it spreading, a child with an itchy, pink eye should:

- *not touch their eyes with their hands.*
- *wash their hands properly.*
- *not share cloths with others.*
- *not wear eye make-up.*
- *follow their eye doctor's instructions.*

*If the conjunctivitis is caused by bacteria, ointments or drops can help. If it's a virus then drops and ointments will **not** help. Infections caused by a virus can take 2-3 weeks to clear up.*

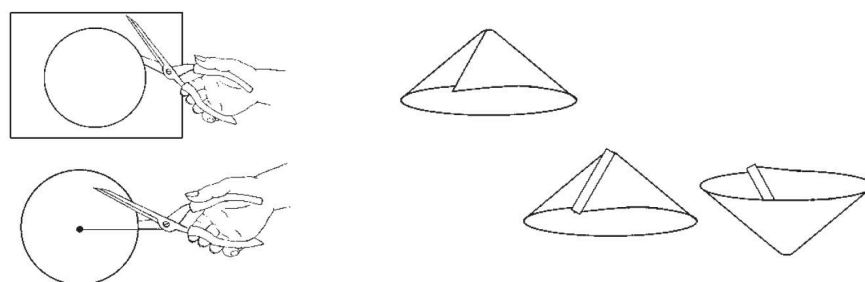
You can make the itchy eye feel better by using a compress. To make a compress, soak a clean cloth in warm water and squeeze it out before putting it on your closed eyelids. Hold it there gently for a few minutes. Don't rub the eye, even with the compress. Change the compress often.

How to make an eye cone or eye pad

Injuries to the eye can happen far away from a health centre where you can get help. It helps to cover the eye for the journey there.

Make an eye cone

1. Making an eye cone is easy and it can be made from paper or card.
2. Cut a circle out of a clean piece of heavy paper or thin cardboard.
3. Cut into the middle in a straight line and make a small hole in the middle. Make
4. a cone shape.
5. Tape the cone, outside and inside.
6. Close the injured eye and tape the cone over it using tape that sticks well to skin.



Make an eye pad

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
2. Do not touch the eye with your hands.
3. Ask the person to shut both eyes while you cover the eye that needs the eyepad.
4. Cover the eye with sterile gauze (from a shop or a clinic) or a very clean cloth cut into a square (6-centimetre sides).
5. Layer another 1 or 2 squares over the eye and use long strips of adhesive tape that sticks to skin to keep the eye pad in place.



Here are three scripts to use when introducing the topic of eye health and vision to a class, a school or a community. These scripts are for guidance only. You know your community best, so please adapt the scripts for your class, school or community. As the focus of the eye health activities are for 10-14 year old children, the scripts for the class and the school are for this age group.

The speaker doing these talks will need to add/adapt the scripts to include the following details:

- When the Eye Health and Vision Programme will start, how long it will be, and how it will fit into the school day.
- Which children will be participating in the programme?
- How it will fit in with eye health and testing services.

Some parts of these three scripts overlap.

Aim: A 15-minute introduction to the topic of *Eye Health and Vision* to a group of 10-14 year old children.

Preparing this script

Read the script carefully and check that all the points are relevant in your context. We suggest you hold up a pair of spectacles, but you could take in other props such as a vision test chart, samples of spectacles available to the children, materials linked the eye health lessons etc.

Preparing the session

You will need one pair of spectacles. It can also be useful to show the children a poster of an eye chart. If there is a child with eye or vision problems in the class, you should talk to them informally first. They may even have ideas for things you can say. They may be happy to speak, but do not force them. The words in capitals should be said by the children community members.

Objectives of this script

- To become aware that vision and eye health is important
- To have an introduction to screening and eye tests
- To have an overview of the ten Eye Health and vision topics

Introduction: 5 minutes

1. *Stand up and turn to face your neighbours. What features do you see on their face?*
 - *We are starting from the top -EYES!*
 - *In the middle - NOSE!*
 - *Below that - MOUTH & TEETH!*
 - *And beside the face - EARS!*
2. *Face me now and let's go over this again and this time put your fingers next to each part: EYES, NOSE, MOUTH & TEETH, EARS. Each of these parts of our face does essential things. What do our eyes do for us? SEE! That's right. Sit down.*
3. *In the weeks ahead we are going to learn more about eyes, the parts of the eyes and how to care for them. We are going to learn what happens if we find we cannot see as well as others.*

About Eye Screening

4. *An eye test tells an eye health personnel what you need to improve your vision, for example, spectacles. These have a lens and a frame. Children who use spectacles or other ways to see more clearly need to be checked regularly to make sure they are getting the best for their vision. For example: as we get older, the eyes can change and when the eyes change, the lenses in the spectacles need to change too. Sometimes new lenses can be put into old frames; sometimes, a child needs new lenses and frames; sometimes children can choose the colour and the size of the frames of the spectacles from a selection.*
5. ***Spectacles are like a good friend***, and once a child has spectacles their lives improve. They can read the blackboard making it easier for them to do well at their schoolwork. With good sight they can also play and have fun!

6. *At first, some children feel shy to wear spectacles. They may not like how they look. But everyone will get used to their 'new look' very quickly, and in a few days, they will not notice the spectacles.*
7. *Friends, neighbours and family members must help to support children wearing spectacles. If other children sometimes say unkind words, scold them! In this class, we will not allow any child to be unkind to another. Being unkind about spectacles is especially unkind as it is much better for the life of the child to wear the spectacles. (If there is a child in the class who wears spectacles and who wants to talk about their experiences invite them to do so here.)*
8. **Eye Health:** *When you wear spectacles, it does not mean your eyes or your body are unhealthy; it means you have vision problems. BUT you can do things to help your eyes stay as healthy as possible.*
9. *In our science/health science lessons, we are going to learn more about eyes and how to keep them healthy. We are learning 10 topics, and in all of these topics, we will learn messages that we want you to share with your families. We are also going to give you questions to ask at home so you can find out more about your family members' experiences of eye health and vision.*
10. **Overview of our Eye Health and Vision Lessons**
I have written the ten topics we are going to learn on the board. Other children are also working on the same topics so you can share your ideas on this topic and teach each other too.
 - *How to Keep Eyes Healthy*
 - *Understanding Our Eyes*
 - *Eye Health Personnel*
 - *Signs of Vision Problems in School-age Children*
 - *Signs of Vision Problems in Young Children*
 - *Have an Eye Health Check*
 - *Improving Vision*
 - *Supporting Children with Vision Problems*
 - *Seek Help for Injured Eyes*
 - *Eye Infections*
11. *Let's say this list out loud together.*
12. *In pairs, practice saying the list out loud together.*
13. *Write the list down in your notebook and in the first lesson we will make up 'actions' to go with each topic to help us remember them.*

END OF SCRIPT

Aim: A 10-minute introduction to the topic of *Eye Health and Vision* in a school assembly attended by 10-14 year olds (higher grades at primary school or lower grades at secondary school).

Preparation for this Assembly

It's important to talk with children who wear spectacles before the school assembly. They need to know that it is happening, so they don't feel they are the centre of attention in a large group. If appropriate, and only if they want to, invite these children to either speak a few words at the talk or to give some words for another child or adult to speak. This can be done anonymously or not. Two examples:

When I first got my spectacles, I felt very shy as I thought that I looked different and everyone would look at me and call me names, but I found that my friends did not do that and they soon forgot that I even wear spectacles.

At first, I did not like my spectacles. My mother did not like them either, but soon we all got used to seeing me wearing them. Now I love them like a friend as they help me see better.

Other children with family members who have eye health issues can also speak or ask others to speak for them. For example:

My grandmother thought she was going blind. Then she met someone who told her she had something called cataracts and a simple operation could bring back her sight. She has had that operation now, and she can see everything well. She is so happy.

Objectives of this script

- To raise awareness of a school eye testing and screening programme among all the children in the school (or the 10-14 year olds).
- To raise awareness that eye health and vision lessons are starting in the school for 10-14 year olds.
- To understand that the lessons will include activities that the children will do at home – like learning and sharing messages about good eye health.

Eye testing and screening programme

As each programme is different, insert details here about your programme.

Wearing Spectacles

1. *Here is a pair of spectacles (hold up a pair of spectacles). Spectacles have a lens and a frame. Different vision problems need different types of lenses, so a pair of spectacles that works for one may not work for someone else. Also, eyes change, so eye tests need to be done each year to check the spectacles are still right. Sometimes children can choose the colour and the size of the frames of the spectacles from a selection.*
2. *Spectacles are like a good friend, and once a child has spectacles their lives improve. They can read their schoolwork and the blackboard. It's easier for them to do well at their schoolwork, play and have fun.*

Support for children with spectacles

3. *At first some children feel shy to wear spectacles. They may not like how they look. But everyone will get used to their 'new look' very quickly, and in a few days, they will not notice the spectacles.*
4. *It is VERY important that friends, neighbours and family members help and support all children wearing spectacles. If other children sometimes say unkind words, scold them! In this school, we do not allow any child to be unkind to another. Being unkind about spectacles is especially unkind as it is much better for the life of the child to wear the spectacles.*
5. *If there is a child in the class who wears spectacles and who wants to talk about their experiences, invite them to do so here.*

Eye Health

6. *When you wear spectacles, it does not mean your eyes or your body are unhealthy it only means you have vision problems. BUT you can do things to help your eyes stay as healthy as possible.*
7. *(Insert here how and when the eye health sessions for the school will take place and then select or list the topics relevant to your programme).*
 - *How to Keep Eyes Healthy*
 - *Understanding Our Eyes*
 - *Eye Health Personnel*
 - *Signs of Vision Problems in School-age Children*
 - *Signs of Vision Problems in Young Children*
 - *Have an Eye Health Check*
 - *Improving Vision*
 - *Supporting Children with Vision Problems*
 - *Seek Help for Injured Eyes*
 - *Eye Infections*
8. *Each of these topics has eye health and vision messages to learn and we want you to share them with your families. We are also going to give you questions to ask at home so you can find out more about your family members' experiences of eye health and vision.*
9. *Now we are going to ask you to discuss three questions about eyes which we want you to talk in pairs of threes:*
 - *Is there anyone in your family who wears spectacles?*
 - *What do they think of their spectacles?*
 - *How do you think spectacles improve people's lives?*
10. *Give the children 5-10 minutes to discuss these questions.*
11. *Ask for volunteers to answer the questions.*
12. *Finish the assembly by picking out two topics you really like and explaining why. Make sure one of these is 'Supporting Children with Vision Problems'!*

END OF SCRIPT

Aim: A 15-minute introduction to the topic of *Eye Health and Vision* to parents and community members. This would be in a community where the children attend a school that is using an eye health and vision programme over the course of the next academic year.

Objectives of this script

- Participants understand the vision screening services available to the children and the broader community.
- Participants understand the importance of supporting children wearing spectacles, especially at first.
- Participants are aware of eye health and vision lessons and that children will be asking questions about this topic at home.
- To answer parent's queries and to understand better their fears and challenges.

Preparing this script

This script presents a situation where:

- The education and health government departments work together.
- The teachers are involved in screening with the support of other staff and parents.
- There is vision screening conducted in or nearby the school, and
- There is a school-based eye health and vision curriculum.

All these elements may be correct in your context, but if not, you will need to adapt this script to fit in with your situation. We suggested you need one pair of spectacles to show to the audience, but you could take in other props such as a vision test chart, samples of spectacles available to the children, materials linked the eye health lessons etc.

About our *Eye Health and Vision* - Promoting School¹

Our School-based Eye Screen Service: How it Works

As part of our health-promoting activities, we have an eye-screening programme for all children. This means that all children's eyes are checked. If we find that your child (or children) has vision problems, then your child is seen by a specialist who tests the child's eyes thoroughly. The eye test will tell us what your child needs to improve their vision.

Good vision is essential for your child to do well in school and to gain confidence.

If you want to take your child for an eye test and buy other spectacles, then this is your choice. We are having our eye screening based at school so that it is easy for the children to have these tests and follow-ups.

Spectacles: Lenses and Frames

(Hold up a pair of spectacles.) Spectacles have a frame and a lens. When a child needs spectacles, they might be given 'ready-made' spectacles or the spectacles may need to be specially made for your child.

¹ Source for the key points in this script *Interventions to improve school-based eye-care services in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review*

Anthea M Burnett, corresponding author Aryati Yashadhana, Ling Lee, Nina Serova, Daveena Brain and Kovin Naidoo

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6238998/>

The spectacles are free/cost X. Children with spectacles need eye tests regularly to make sure the lenses in the spectacles are still helping as much as they can. When the eyes change the lenses in the spectacles need to change too. Sometimes new lenses can be put into old frames; sometimes, a child needs new lenses and frames.

If your child is given free or cheaper spectacles or 'ready to wear' spectacles, this does not mean that the spectacles are low quality or do not work well. Your child will be given the best spectacles to improve their vision. Sometimes children can choose the colour and the size of the frames of the spectacles from a selection that is offered.

Spectacles – A Vital Friendship

Once your child has spectacles, their vision improves. They can read their schoolwork and the blackboard and see better when they are having fun. It's easier for them to do well at their schoolwork and when they play. At first, some children feel shy to wear their spectacles. They may not like what they look like. But everyone will get used to their 'new look' very quickly and in a few days, they will not notice the spectacles.

Supporting Children Who Wear Spectacles – Especially at First

It is VERY important that friends, neighbours and family members support all children wearing spectacles. If other children say unkind words, scold them! As a health-promoting school, we will not allow any child to be unkind to another. Being unkind about spectacles is especially unkind as it is much better for the life of the child to wear the spectacles.

Vision and Eye Health Lessons

In our school, all the children will be learning about Vision and Eye Health. We are teaching these lessons in a special way. We are giving the children questions to ask at home to help them learn messages about vision and eye health and to ask for your opinions and experiences. This will make the eye health lessons more fun, more meaningful and help them to support each other – especially those with vision problems or other eye problems.

Our Own Eye Health

It's very important for all of us to look after our eyes. As we get older, most of us will need to use spectacles to improve our vision. Although many vision problems have nothing to do with our diet or our health, looking after our health also helps promote eye health too. The most important ways to promote our eye health are to:

- 1. Keep hands, face and eyes clean and free from flies.*
- 2. Eat foods rich in Vitamin A like eggs and milk, yellow and orange vegetables, fruits and leafy greens.*
- 3. Being immunised.*
- 4. Getting help for itchy, red or infected eyes.*
- 5. Walking carefully when holding sharp objects.*

Helping those Close to Us Understand

Sometimes our elderly parents or relatives can be worried by our children wearing spectacles. If this is the case, then talk to them about these important facts:

- *Children with poor vision do better in school when they wear spectacles.*
- *Healthy people of any age can have vision problems.*
- *School is a safe and happy place for children who wear spectacles.*
- *Everyone at school will make sure that children with spectacles are treated the same as other children, and any children who are unkind to a person wearing spectacles will be punished.*
- *Eyes do not get worse when a child started to wear spectacles. The spectacles help the child see clearly and can actually prevent or slow down vision loss.*

If an elderly relative or a community leader discourages you or your children then organise a meeting to discuss their fears and worries with our local health worker.

Questions and Answers session

CLOSING WORDS BY HEADTEACHER AND COMMUNITY LEADER

END OF SCRIPT

Sometimes it can be hard to get children to wear their spectacles, even when the family and the children know it is a good idea. If this is happening in your class, school or community, it is useful to involve children in finding out what is happening and why and making action plans with children. These can include ideas on how to get children who need to wear spectacles to wear them and how other children can be aware of this and support their friends and peers.

You will need to set aside some time or run an *Action Planning Workshop*. Conduct the workshop over two full days. If time is an issue, it can be adapted and done in one day, but reduce the number of activities. Include the family members of the children who need to wear spectacles too. They can participate at the end of the second workshop when the children are presenting their action plans. A workshop can also be a part of a planning an **Eye Health and Vision** campaign that you are running.



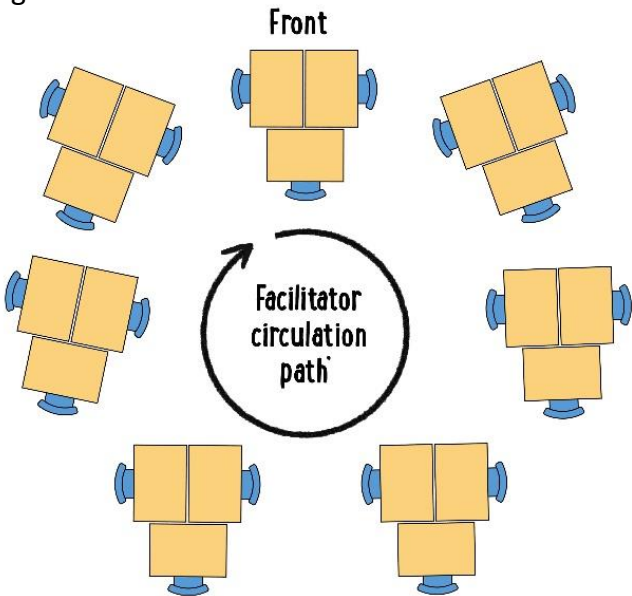
Conduct this process in two parts. The *Finding Out Workshop* aims to find out the reasons why children find it difficult to wear their spectacles. The *Action Planning Workshop* aims to summarise and the results from part one and work with children to create individual and group action plans.

Logistics

There needs to be at least one facilitator and 21 children. The ideal numbers are two facilitators, one observer and thirty-five children. The group should include some children who wear spectacles and/or children who have had an eye test and have a prescription but do not have or do not wear their spectacles. It is also possible to involve family members or others in the community who wear spectacles and who would like to participate. All participants should be volunteers. Conduct the workshop in a room that seats all the participants comfortably around seven 'workstations'. The workshop includes seven x 30-minute group tasks, one task per table. Each task aims to find the reasons behind a child's choice not to wear spectacles.

Provide paper and pens for all the participants and lightweight poster paper and marker pens for each group.

The facilitator must prepare the seven tasks for the *Finding Out Workshop*. Ideas for this have been set out in the table on page 55.



The Finding Out Workshop

The aim of this workshop is to work with children to find out from them why children might find it difficult to wear their spectacles.

Steps

1. Divide the participants into seven subgroups. Each subgroup should have at least one child who wears spectacles (or who has spectacles and does not wear them).
2. Introduce the workshop and the tasks for the day. Explain how the groups move from task to task. Each group task has an activity and a set of questions linked to the activity. Examples of these are set out in the table on page 55. **Finalising the tasks and the measurement of these tasks must be designed** or adapted for the specific challenges faced by a particular age group in a specific context or community.
3. Conduct a session on *Ground Rules*.
4. Groups spend 30-minutes on each task and then move onto the next task. You can use a whistle or a drum let everyone know when it is time to move.
5. Organise a 30-minute break after two tasks and a one-hour break after four tasks and conduct a whole group plenary activity at the end.
6. After all the tasks are finished, the group gathers in a circle to share what they have learned and enjoyed from the activities.

Children respond well to creative, fun methods to stimulate discussion such as storytelling, drawing, mapping, puppets, using images like photos and pictures.¹ Establish a warm and trusting atmosphere and encourage everyone to ask coaching-style open-ended questions.

Between the two workshops, facilitators assess the information gathered from the *Finding Out Workshop* and plan how to present the results to the children and prepare for the *Action Planning Workshop*.

Action Planning Workshop

This is a follow-up workshop to reflect on the results of the Finding out Workshop and to ask children to plan actions that they can take:

1. To get children who need to wear spectacles to wear them and/or
2. To support their friends and peers.

Steps

1. Present the key findings from the *Finding Out Workshop*.

For example, reasons children don't wear their spectacles linked to the children as individuals:

- *I don't wear spectacles because I lose them.*
- *I forget that I have my spectacles with me.*
- *I take my spectacles off when someone mentions them or makes me feel bad for wearing them.*
- *I take my spectacles off at home as I know some family members do not like seeing me wear them.*

¹ Contact www.childrenforhealth.org for further ideas on working with partners to design, record and measure the workshop tasks. These need to be tailored to the context, challenge level, age group and to the time available to run the workshop.

And reasons children don't wear their spectacles linked to the behaviour of others:

- *Children who wear spectacles fear wearing spectacles because of teasing and bullying at school.*
- *Educators do not have the confidence, skills, content or activities to teach children aged 10-14 about eye health and vision.*
- *Many people in our community do not know about vision problems and feel negative towards children who wear spectacles.*
- *Children feel shy to wear spectacles as they think it makes them look ugly.*

2. Divide everyone into seven groups as before. Keep the numbers the same, but the groups can have different members, if wanted. Try to have one person who wears spectacles in each group.
3. Ask the groups to discuss how others can support children who find it hard to wear their spectacles. Ask them to draw up a list of five or more ideas. You might then have a break at this point. Here are some ideas linked to our four examples.

1. Children who wear spectacles fear wearing them because of teasing and bullying at school.

- **Supporting children by using a buddy**
Each child who wears spectacles (or CWS) has a buddy who is responsible for reminding them to wear spectacles.
- **Whole school approach**
Every school term there is a day when everyone in the school makes/wears spectacles – they can be made from cardboard.
- **Whole class approach**
Children talk openly to children who wear spectacles about their vision. They 'stick up for' and report to teachers any teasing or bullying of children who wear spectacles.

2. Educators do not have the confidence, skills, content or activities to teach children aged 10-14 about eye health and vision.

Eye Health and Vision Materials for Educators

We want our schools to be places where children feel happy to wear spectacles. Teachers can improve their knowledge and awareness of eye health and vision. They can teach us fun, interesting lessons on eye health and vision. They can include us as helpers to make sure everyone knows about why and how to support children with eye health and vision problems.

3. Many people in our community do not know about vision problems and feel negative towards children who wear spectacles.

Talk to our Families and the Community about Eye Health and Vision

We want our community to be a place where children feel happy and supported to wear spectacles. Teachers or headteachers can give a talk to our parents about eye health and vision in a place and at a time where they can also ask questions.

4. Children feel shy to wear spectacles as they think it makes them look ugly.

- **Classroom and school-based support and reporting systems**
We can make kind and positive comments to our classmates who wear spectacles. We can talk to them about the spectacles being a good friend to help them in all aspects of their life. We can speak to them about role models and show them pictures of influential people who show a positive image and wear spectacles.

- **Role Models**

We want role models in our community, on TV and in the media to talk about vision and the positive effect of wearing spectacles.

4. Ask the groups to discuss what individual children who should wear spectacles can do themselves. Here are some ideas linked to our four examples.

Examples of Individual Actions:

- **I don't wear spectacles because I lose them.**

Every night when I go to sleep, I put my spectacles next to my schoolbooks, so I remember to take them with me.

- **I forget that I have my spectacles with me.**

As soon as I arrive at school, I take my spectacles out of my bag and put them on my desk or around my neck (if I have a string or chord).

- **I take my spectacles off when someone mentions them or makes me feel bad for wearing them.**

When I feel like this, I will count to 120 slowly in my head and then take them off if I still want to. (These minutes can be increased over time.)

- **I take my spectacles off at home as I know some family members do not like seeing me wear them.**

When I come home from school, I will wear my spectacles for five minutes (or more). If a family member makes comments, if I can, I will count to 120 slowly in my head and then take them off if I still want to. (These minutes can increase over time.)

Note: The last two actions are known as '1% actions.' They are small things a child can do to help change their reaction to the behaviour of others. The idea is to start small, so the child doesn't fail and then gradually build up as they get more confident. The child keeping their spectacles on for 5 minutes at home after school may after a few weeks be asked 'if you could do it for five minutes, do you think you could do it for 10 minutes?' The idea is to slowly and easily build-up to the constant wearing of them at home when needed. It's also important that the child is not encouraged to do anything that might get them in trouble at home.

5. Ask the groups to write their ideas down on strips of paper.
6. In the whole group, each smaller group presents their ideas, putting the strips of paper on the floor in the middle of the room while the group stands or sits in a circle. Where the ideas are the same or similar, the strips of paper can be put in a cluster.
7. In the whole group do a *Three Cs* check on each of the ideas. Ask if each of these actions are **Clear**, can be done in a **Consistent** way and actions that the children can **Commit** too!
8. Take a break.
9. While the group is having a break, the facilitator organises the final action plans. These will be ideas for everyone to do and for individual children to do.
10. Read out the list and ask the group, are these going to work in practice? 1. What do we need to make sure that we take action from the moment we step outside and 2. How do we monitor our plans to check that they are working?
11. Celebrate and close the workshop.

Guidance Questions and Activities for the <i>Finding Out More</i> Workshop		
Tasks 1-7	Select and adapt questions in each category	Ideas for ways to stimulate the discussion in each task ²
1. Finding out about Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What do different members of your family say about wearing spectacles?■ What about your friends?■ If a friend was wearing spectacles, what would you say?■ (CWS³) When did you start wearing spectacles?■ (CWS) Do you know what your parents think about your vision and your spectacles?	<p>PICTURES</p> <p>Have a selection of several culturally appropriate pictures or photos of children of different genders in the street, outside, at school, at play etc. One or more of the children in the images wears spectacles. Invite children to select a picture they like and talk about it. Then use different methods to get the children discussing the questions⁴.</p>

² These suggestions are for guidance only. The planners or facilitators 1. Prepare clear instructions for the children to follow for each of the seven tasks and 2. Decide how to record and measure the answers. The results are presented to the group at the start of the *Action Planning* workshop.

³ CWS is a child who wears (or should wear) spectacles.

⁴ Methods can include brainstorming, think-pair-share, mini-group to a bigger group, individual thinking to bigger group etc. Use a variety of methods need to across the tasks and the specific design linked to the age group, context and decisions on how to measure and report on the results.

2. Finding out about Biology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Do you know how to spot someone with bad eyesight who is not wearing spectacles?</i> ■ <i>What effect do you think poor vision has on a child?</i> ■ <i>When a child first puts on spectacles, how do you think they feel?</i> ■ <i>(CWS) When a child wears their spectacles in class/at home/outside; what do you think happens, how do you think this affects their mind or body? Does this change over time?</i> 	<p>STORY</p> <p>Create a short story about the physical and mental effects of wearing spectacles told from the perspective of a child who is new to wearing spectacles. Write it 'in the words of' a child from the context. Then use different methods to get the children discussing the questions.</p>
3. Finding out about Our Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Where are children more likely to wear spectacles? Why?</i> ■ <i>Where are children least likely to wear spectacles? Why?</i> ■ <i>Are there many children in the community who wear spectacles? Why? Why not?</i> ■ <i>Where can children have an eye test?</i> ■ <i>Are there places where CWS may not feel safe? Why?</i> 	<p>MAP</p> <p>Draw a simple map on paper or on a board showing key features of the village/town/city in which the children live. It does not need to be accurate, just enough to give an idea that this task is about 'place' and how it affects us. Invite children to talk about what they like and dislike about the place they live and what they think could be done to improve it. Then use different methods to get the children discussing the questions.</p>
4. Finding out about Systems in Our Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Do you think that people in society are positive or negative about children who wear spectacles?</i> ■ <i>If a child has trouble with their eyesight, do you know what their parents should do?</i> ■ <i>How do people in your community react to someone wearing spectacles?</i> 	<p>CIRCLES</p> <p>Prepare an image showing a number of circles within a circle and write 'me' in the centre. In the next layer write 'family', then 'school', then 'community', then 'society' (and so on). Each child names one or two people they know that 'belongs' in each layer of the circle. Then use different methods to get the children discussing the questions.</p>

5. Finding out about Systems in Our School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>What are you taught about eye health and vision?</i> ■ <i>How are children wearing spectacles in a classroom treated?</i> ■ <i>Are there local slang words/jokes/references used for children who wear spectacles at school?</i> ■ <i>Are children in school with spectacles given any support? If so, what?</i> 	MATERIALS Display any school textbooks, posters or other materials (like leaflets from the health clinic) that feature eye health and vision. Ask the children to look at these and show them to each other. Then use different methods to get the children discussing the questions.
6. Finding out about Systems in Our Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>How would family members communicate about someone with spectacles?</i> ■ <i>Are there local slang words/jokes/references used in the family to refer to people who wear spectacles?</i> ■ <i>Do family members you know react differently to children of different ages or genders who wear spectacles and if so, how? And why?</i> 	CASE STUDY Create a context-specific case study/cartoon drawing where family members show different attitudes to children of different ages and genders wearing spectacles. For example, they may not like a teenage daughter to wear spectacles, but feel positive about a teenage boy or primary school-aged girl. Then use different methods to get the children discussing the questions.
7. Finding out about Our Thoughts and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>What do you believe about wearing spectacles? Why do you think you believe this?</i> ■ <i>What would you say to your friend about wearing spectacles? Why do you think you believe this?</i> ■ <i>Who/what makes you think as you do about wearing spectacles? Why do you think you believe this?</i> ■ <i>What reasons have you heard CWS children give for not wearing spectacles?</i> ■ <i>(CWS) What do you want to be doing instead of having to remember to wear spectacles? Why?</i> 	FACES Create a worksheet that shows ten cartoon outlines 'faces'/'emojis' (smiling, laughing, frowning, angry, sad); five with and five without spectacles. Tell children that many children do not like to wear their spectacles. Ask each child to pick one emoji that shows how they feel about this and explain to the group why they chose that emoji. Then use different methods to get the children discussing all/some of the questions.

Think-Pair-Share (TSP)

A three-step method often used at the beginning of a session.

1. **THINK** Ask the children to think about a statement or a question, or even draw something or write keywords that relate to it.
2. **PAIR** Ask the children to talk about their ideas with one other person (or in threes if the group has odd numbers).
3. **SHARE** Ask the children to share their ideas (in a small group, a larger group or the whole group).

When the children get used to this method, you can create a hand signal to tell the children to use the method. This makes them feel part of a team with its own rules.

Drama, Role-plays and Dialogues

- A **DRAMA** is when the children act as if they are another person in an imaginary situation.
- A **ROLE-PLAY** is a method to practice a skill or situation, like asking *a good question* to a family member. Children can act as themselves or as others, e.g. a group of mothers at a clinic.
- A **DIALOGUE** is a conversation between two people – either themselves or acting the part of others. Finger puppets are used to develop dialogues. This method is useful for exploring sensitive topics like breastfeeding or the lack of money for a balanced diet.

Clapping to Learn Health Messages

Children love clapping games, and many traditional songs and rhymes can be used. These games can be used alongside children chanting health messages. So, when children play the clapping game, they remember and share the health message!

Using Puppets

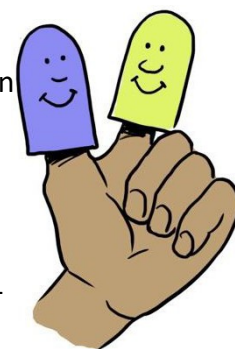
ZuZu and ZaZa are two Scarlet Macaw puppets used by *Children for Health* as a fun method to communicate and remember health messages. They are puppets with sound boxes in their beaks, so they squawk. ZuZu could be an older brother (of around 10-12) and ZaZa his younger sister. The puppets are used to tell stories about the caring role of children in families. Puppets can take on any personality as needed. Other reasons why puppets work well include:

- Puppets make people smile when they see them. They are a reminder that the work we do is about being light and playful and having fun; although as we focus on health, we are dealing with serious topics.
- Parrots are a bird known for their intelligence and ability to relate to humans.
- Many types of parrots, including the Scarlet Macaw, are able to listen to the human voice and repeat what is said. This makes them good ambassadors for activities in which we want to listen to and amplify children's voices.
- Puppets, in general, can be used in puppet shows and dramas to tackle issues that may be too sensitive otherwise. Children can speak 'through' or talk to puppets.
- Puppets are eye-catching and memorable.
- Playing with puppets can develop creativity and imagination in children and adults working with them.



Singing Stories of Change

When children help their friends and siblings, there are often heart-warming stories on how this happened. Some schools use storytelling to find out 'what's changed' since the programme began. A good way to do this is to create a singing circle where the group forms a circle and sings or hums lightly to a tune while the storyteller goes into the middle of the circle and tells their story of change. When children start to tell these stories, write them down and/or get groups of children to turn them into a role-play or an acted-out story for others to hear and enjoy.



The Rainbow Stick

You might also like to use the Rainbow Stick with the children in your class or group to help them learn, collect and remember the eye health and vision topics and messages.

Once a child or a group of children learns, shares and then tells the story about the experience of sharing a message give them a ribbon or strip of fabric to symbolise this achievement. The colours of the fabric could be different for each of the messages or you could have one colour for each topic.

Ribbons are not awarded for just learning a message, but learning and then sharing the message. Children tell the story of how they shared the message for the reward of the ribbon.

Children love to collect things, to learn new things and they love to share. Children can possess a Rainbow Stick of their own, or they can make one in a group or as a class. They are simple and cheap to make. The Rainbow Stick can inspire and motivate each child to collect as many ribbons as they can, to help each other learn them well, to share stories how they shared the messages with other children and in their families. With support from their families and teachers, a Rainbow Stick enables children to record their progress and have a teaching tool to use with younger children.

Just as children worldwide learn their times tables until they can recite them, children can learn health times tables. Each message on the Rainbow Stick can be shared with younger children and their families, by mobile phone as a text message or by using social media.

Children, their friends, teachers and schools may like to make up other messages and add new topics and shades of colour to the stick.

The Good Question

The Good Question is a method that is about encouraging children to ask a question that helps them understand the practical problems faced by people linked to a health message.

For example: Message 16, Listen and Support.

When children first get spectacles there may be many reasons why they do not like wearing them. Friends, family and teachers must help to support them and listen to their worries.



This is a simple message to learn and share, but what are the practical everyday problems that make children feel worried about wearing spectacles? A Good Question that children can ask is: *What are the reasons why children in our community may not feel like wearing their spectacles when they need them to see well?*

- The children collect ideas and opinions and discuss these with others at the next session. Children can discuss ways to overcome practical problems.
- The ideas can be presented at community meetings.
- Children help overcome practical problems with the help of adults. There might be some that children cannot help to overcome but reporting the challenges will be helpful.

Vote with your Feet

When the children want to answer YES they move to one side of the room. When they want to answer NO they move to the other side. You can also give the option of moving to the middle of the room if they, DON'T KNOW. Once the children have moved, you can ask the children why they moved to that side of the room. When you have talked through all the answers repeat the exercise.

Storytelling

When the children start influencing their friends and siblings, there are often heart-warming stories on how this happened. When children start to tell these stories, write them down and/or get groups of children to turn them into a role-play or an acted-out story for others to hear and enjoy.

Inspiring results from the things that children do can be woven into story-lines in books for children.



This section gives background knowledge for educators working with 10-14 year olds on the topic of **Eye Health and Vision**. This topic might be on the school curriculum, it might be a new topic, or you may want to do some extra sessions on eye health and vision as a topic in a school, in a club or as part of an out of school programme. You might be affected personally by eye health issues too.

Basic Care for Eyes

- Keep the face and eyes clean and protected from too much sun, wind and dust.
- Eating nutritious food can prevent many eye problems.
- Injuries can damage vision or cause blindness. Act quickly: go to the closest hospital or health clinic for a serious eye injury or if you spot danger signs.
- When far away or very close objects are difficult to see, the right kind of spectacles often helps people see much better. Because vision changes over time, you may need new spectacles every so often.
- For adults, cataracts and glaucoma are common causes of vision loss that can lead to blindness. Treatment can help restore vision or stop it from getting worse.
- Knowing about the eye and its parts will help you keep the eyes healthy and take care of eye problems.

When Eyes are Healthy

- The eyelids open and shut easily, and the eyelashes curve outward, not in toward the eye.
- The white part is all white, smooth and moist.
- The cornea (the clear covering of the iris and pupil) is shiny, smooth and transparent.
- The pupil is black and round. This black part reacts to more or less light by becoming smaller or bigger.

Keep the Eyes Clean

- To help prevent eye problems, wash your face often. Washing keeps dirt and germs from getting in the eye.
- You do not need a lot of water to wash the face. You can make a Tippy-Tap from a clean plastic bottle or container.
- Let the air dry your face and hands to avoid infections from sharing cloth or towels.
- When eyes are infected, clean them often with a clean cloth and clean water. Wipe gently from the corner of the eye nearest to the nose outward to the corner of the eye by the ear. Use a different part of the cloth to clean each eye and then wash or boil the cloth with soap and dry it before you use it again.
- Wash your hands with soap before and after cleaning eyes that are infected to prevent spreading infection.

How to Remove Dirt or an Eyelash from the Eye

- Have the person close their eyes and move their eyes around from side-to-side and up and down. Then, while you hold their eyelid open, have them look up and down again. This makes the eye produce tears that can wash out the dirt.
- Another way of making tears is to gently rub the GOOD eye. This produces tears in both eyes. Do not rub the sore eye.

- Or try to remove the bit of dirt or eyelash with clean water. Use only clean, safe water, not any other liquid. Hold the eye open while rinsing with water from a cup or the child can open the eye and blink into a full cup of water or lie down and tilt their head back while you pour water so it runs from the inside (near the nose) to the outside of the eye (near the ear).
- If you can see it, the bit of dirt can be gently removed with the corner of damp, clean cloth, tissue, or cotton swab.
- When dirt is under the upper eyelid, you may only be able to see it by turning the upper eyelid over a cotton swab. Ask the person to look down while you do this.
- If you cannot get the dirt out easily send them for medical help.

Community Dangers, Pollution and Sun Harm Eyes

Chemicals, air and water pollution, and the strong rays in sunlight (called ultraviolet or UV rays) can irritate the eyes and cause problems. At home or in the community, eyes can be injured by many things or burned by chemicals.

- Cooking: smoke from cooking can irritate and dry the eyes.
- Air pollution: dust and chemicals in the air affect the eyes of everyone who works or plays outside, especially children.
- Water pollution: chemicals from factories or mines, pesticides and sewage are released into rivers or lakes, irritating the eyes and skin of people who bathe or wash clothes there.
- Farming tools, dirt, rocks, tree branches, poisonous plants, chemical fertilizers and pesticides can all damage the eyes.
- Outside: sun, dust and wind can irritate the eyes.
- Riding on a motorcycle without protecting eyes can lead to an eye injury.
- Chemicals: factory workers, farmers, miners, janitors, domestic workers and others use chemicals. If chemicals are left around and then get onto hands which touch the eye, the chemicals can burn the eye very quickly.
- Machines or equipment left around can have pieces of metal or wood break off and injure the eye, as can high heat, sparks, or flames.

Hats and Sunglasses Protect Eyes from the Sun

People outside in strong sunlight can protect their eyes by wearing a hat and, if possible, dark spectacles that are made to screen out UV (ultraviolet) sun rays are best. Protection from the sun can slow some types of cataracts. Even after many years of too much sun, using hats and sunglasses can prevent eye problems from getting worse.

Avoid Eye Strain

Reading or working where there is not enough light, looking at the screen of a computer or mobile phone all the time or focusing the eyes for many hours on something close is hard on the eyes. Reduce eye strain by improving lighting and regularly looking away at something across the room.

Care for the Eyes with Good Food

- Many foods that help the body stay healthy also help people have good vision. Foods especially good for eye health include vegetables (leafy greens, pepper, peas, beans, sweet potato, carrot and pumpkin), fruits (mango, papaya, oranges and avocado), fish, nuts and whole grains.
- Eating nutritious foods during pregnancy helps the developing baby's eyes. Breastfeeding babies and making sure young children eat green and orange vegetables and fruits can prevent vitamin A deficiency.
- Reduce salt and sugar.

Common Eye Problems by Age:

- **Baby's** eye infections need treatment. Some of these may be prevented by cleaning the baby's eyes and using eye ointment at birth.
- **Young children's** vision problems may be hard to notice. Starting at six months old, see if the child's eyes move and follow a light or a toy when you move it around. A child with a wandering or crossed eye can be helped and spectacles may help with poor vision. For children with very limited or no vision, there are many ways to help a blind child develop their skills.
- **School-age children** who cannot see clearly cannot tell you they need spectacles because they do not know what good vision is like. A child who has headaches, squints a lot or has difficulty in school or when playing games may have a vision problem and need spectacles. It is a good idea to learn what to do if there is an eye injury from sports or fighting at school. Any child can get eye injuries. Keep chemicals and sharp objects locked away and out of reach of children.
- **Adult vision** may change at any age and sometimes spectacles can help. If a person has diabetes or high blood pressure, treatment to manage these problems will help prevent further harm to the eyes. Different kinds of work make some eye injuries or conditions more likely.
- **Older adults** are more likely to develop cataracts and need reading spectacles.

Eye Emergencies and Injuries

Some eye problems, like injuries, are clearly emergencies. Other eye problems may seem less urgent, such as signs of illness or infection, but if there are danger signs, they too can quickly lead to blindness. Protect the eye and send the person to get emergency medical help for these danger signs:

- Sudden loss of vision in one or both eyes.
- Any injury that cuts into the eyeball or eyelid.
- An injury with blood inside the coloured part of the eye.
- Severe pain in the eye with a white-greyish spot on the clear part. This could be an ulcer on the cornea.
- Severe pain inside the eye.
- Pus inside the coloured part of the eye.
- In a baby or child, a cloudy or white pupil.
- Seeing small spots are not an eye emergency, unless they start suddenly along with flashes of light. This can happen when the retina, a part inside the eye, detaches from the back of the eye. Surgery is needed quickly to prevent loss of vision.
- Sudden double vision, especially in both eyes at once, can be a sign of several problems. Double vision is seeing everything as if there were two. Suddenly seeing double may indicate a serious problem. Get medical help.
- Also treat as an emergency any infection or inflammation that does not get better after four days of antibiotic ointment or drops.

Injuries to the Eyes

Anything sharp that can scratch the eye (such as thorns, branches or pieces of metal) could cause serious injury to the eyes. Treatment by an experienced health worker is important, so the injury does not lead to blindness. Even small scratches or cuts can get infected and harm vision if not cared for correctly. A wound inside the eyeball is especially dangerous.

If the eye has been hit hard with a fist, stone or another hard object, the eye is in danger. And if the eye becomes very painful one or two days after being hit, this could be acute glaucoma.

Danger Signs

- The person cannot see well with the injured eye.
- There is a thorn, splinter or other object stuck in the eye.
- The wound is deep.
- There is blood or pus inside the coloured part of the eye.
- The pupils do not get smaller in response to brighter light.

Injuries to the Eyes from Chemicals

When cleaners, pesticides, gasoline (petrol) or other fuels, car battery acid, snake venom, lime powder (limestone) or other chemicals get into the eye, they can cause immediate injury, so it is essential to act quickly.

1. You will need lots of clean water to pour on the eye.
2. Have the person lie down.
3. The chemical can get trapped under the eyelid. Hold the eye or eyes open (the injured person or another person can help) as you gently pour the water onto the eye to rinse it.
4. As you wash the chemical out, don't let the water run from one eye into the other. If only one eye is affected, tilt the head, so the water runs toward the side of the head, not toward the other eye. If the chemical went into both eyes, tilt the head back and pour the water on the nose so that it runs toward both eyes at the same time.
5. Keep pouring water gently over the eye(s) for at least 15 minutes (up to 30 minutes). The chemical may still be causing harm to the eye even if it seems to have washed away.
6. After rinsing, send the person for medical help.

Protect Eyes when Injured or Healing

After an injury, a paper cup or an eye cone can protect the eye while the person goes for emergency help. The eye cone will help remind the person not to rub their eye by mistake and can prevent the injury from getting worse.

Red Eyes and Painful Eyes

Various problems cause red, painful eyes. When trying to determine the problem and what to do about it, ask the person if there was an injury to the eye or if they felt something go into the eyes. If there is redness, check if eyes are watery or have discharge (pus or secretions):

- Thick secretions or discharge can be conjunctivitis ('pink eye' or 'red eye'), a bacterial infection, especially if the eye is also very red.
- Watery eyes, with mild redness, that feels itchy in the corner of the eyes near the nose, are usually allergies.
- Watery eyes, with mild redness after a cold may be caused by a virus and needs no special treatment and medicines will not help.
- Watery eyes, with redness and fever, cough and a runny nose, could be a sign of measles, even before a rash appears.

Other Problems with the Eyes and Seeing

- Ulcer on the cornea
- Iritis (inflammation of the iris)
- Trachoma
- Cataracts
- Glaucoma
- Fleshy growth across the eye
- Blood in the whole of the eye
- Dry eyes and crusty eyelids
- Lumps and swelling on the eyelids
- Floaters (seeing small spots)
- Vitamin A deficiency
- Crossed eyes or wandering squint
- River Blindness
- Other illness that can affect the eyes (TB, HIV & AIDS, Diabetes, Herpes, Liver problems – like Jaundice)

Poor Vision and Spectacles

Many children and adults do not see well. A person may not see people or read signs clearly from far away or must squint to see up close. They may have headaches or blurred vision after reading before realising they need spectacles. With spectacles matched to your eyes, you can see better. Find out where there are local programs that test vision and supply free or low-cost spectacles. It is common for a person's vision to change. You may need to change your spectacles every few years.

Reading Spectacles

People over the age of 40 may have a harder time seeing well enough to do close-up tasks like reading, sorting seeds or threading a needle. Reading spectacles magnify close-up things to look larger. They come in several different strengths of magnification. Spectacles that are labelled +1 make close objects look slightly bigger, +2 make them look even bigger and +3 the biggest. Test each of the different reading spectacles by trying to read a book or thread a needle at a comfortable distance. If a person has trouble seeing close up and also cannot see well far away, reading spectacles may not solve the problem. Help them visit an eye clinic to find out what is affecting their vision.

Contact Lenses and Surgery to Correct Vision

Although not widely available in some countries, contacts lenses and surgery are other ways to correct vision. Contact lenses are tiny plastic lenses that rest directly on the eye to correct vision, just as spectacles do. After a vision test, a specialist can help you find contact lenses that will work for your eyes. Do not use contact lenses made for someone else. Do not sleep wearing contact lenses unless they are made for overnight use. There are many different kinds of contact lenses and each type needs specific liquids to disinfect, store and rinse them. Do not use homemade versions of the contact lens liquids.

While contact lenses are convenient, they can cause serious problems if not cared for and used properly. To prevent infections, always wash your hands before touching contact lenses. If you have mild irritation in your eye or an eye infection, do not use contact lenses until your eyes are better.

Clean and disinfect lenses before wearing them again. If a contact lens has a torn edge, do not use it. If you have pain, burning, discharge, unusual redness, or blurred vision, this could be a danger sign of a scratch or ulcer on the cornea or another serious problem. Get help from an experienced health worker.

Laser Surgery

For some people, poor vision can be repaired with laser surgery (surgery using a very strong beam of light instead of cutting instruments). This is different than the kind of surgery to treat cataracts and may be expensive. Before spending money, it is wise to talk to others who have used the same eye surgeon with good results.

Living with Poor Vision

Sometimes a child is born blind or a person's poor vision cannot be improved with spectacles, surgery or medicines. People learn to live with blindness and poor vision. With support from family and community, people who are blind attend school, earn a living, and have their own families. To make life easier and safer for a person with poor vision or blindness:

- Introduce yourself when speaking to the person, speak to them directly and let them know when you are walking away from them.
- Let them grasp your elbow when you walk together.
- You can alert them and lead them around any danger. This is more respectful than pulling a person along by their hand or body.
- Create handrails or guide ropes to the latrine or other places the person goes to daily.
- Do not move furniture or other objects to a different place in the home, school or workplace. Alert the person if you do move something.
- Drive carefully in the area where a blind person lives. A bell on a cow or other animal warns a person who does not see.

Children with disabilities, including blindness, can be more at risk for abuse, including sexual abuse, than children who can see. They need family and community protection to keep them safe, take care of themselves, go to school and lead good lives. Helping children to move about, understand the world around them and learn the skills they need is very important.

References

- [Problems with Eyes and Seeing](#)
- [Helping Children Who Are Blind](#)

20/200	W	E	M	6/60
20/120	E	E	W	6/36
20/80	E	E	W	6/24
20/60	W	E	W	6/18
20/40	E	W	E	6/12
20/30	W	E	W	6/9
20/20	E	W	E	6/6

Distance Vision Acuity Chart — for use at 3 meters (10 feet)



Adapted from Matthew Smith, 2009
by Hesperian Health Guides

This box should measure 2cm x 2cm
when you print this page

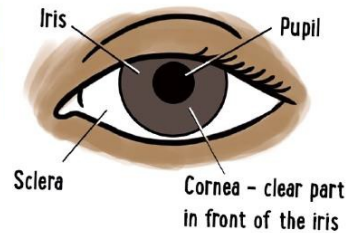


Eye Health and Vision – 10 messages for children to learn & share

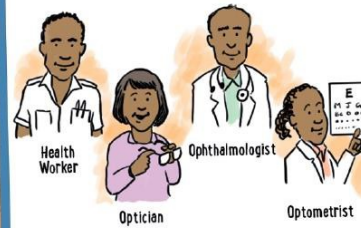
1. Keep eyes healthy by 1. Keeping hands, face and eyes clean and free from flies. 2. Eating food rich in Vitamin A like eggs and milk, yellow and orange vegetables and fruits and leafy greens 3. Being immunised 4. Getting help for itchy, red or infected eyes 5. walking carefully when holding sharp objects.



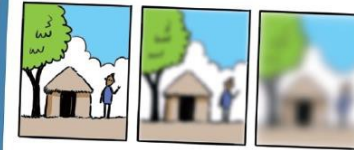
2. Our eyes are shaped like a small ball. The front part of the eye has a coloured circle, the iris, and a smaller black circle, the pupil.



3. There are several different kinds of eye health personnel. Some treat eye diseases, others test eyes and choose ways to help a person see better.



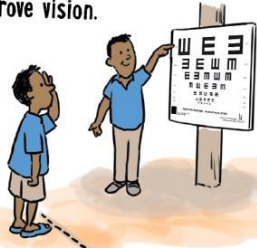
4. Children who cannot see clearly may need an eye test. They may hold a reading book too close, look at the floor, seem shy, don't want to play or copy class notes from another book close by.



5. Some children are born with small white dots in their eyes. This causes blindness and can be treated.



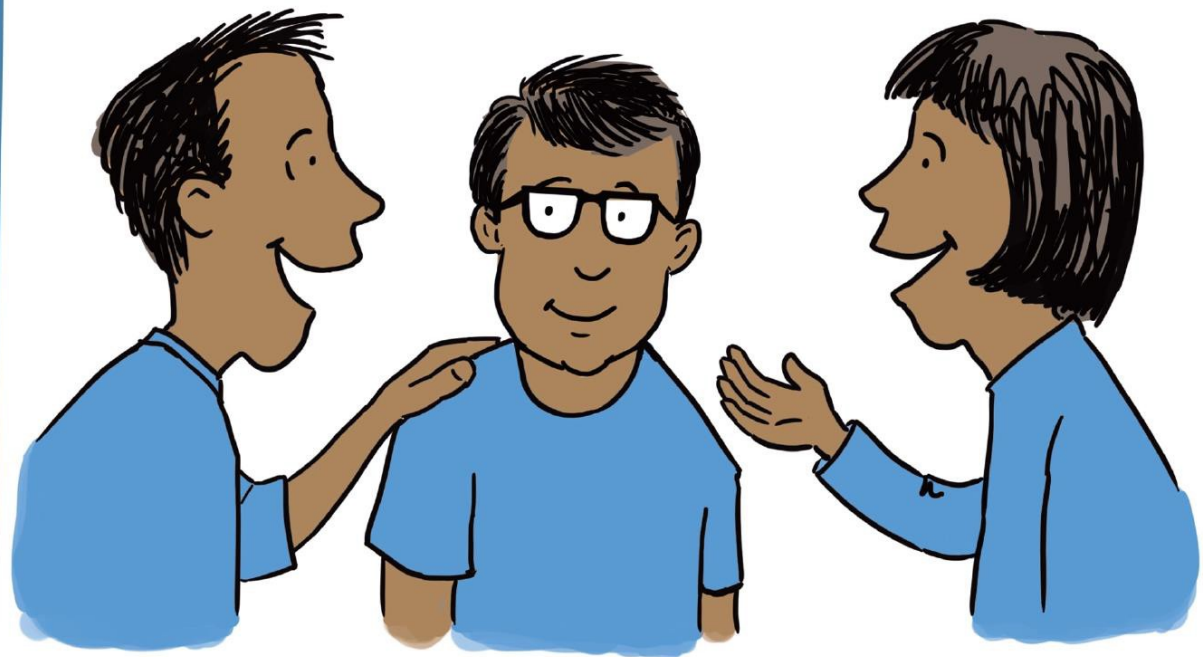
6. Eye checks find out why a person cannot see clearly and show eye health personnel what to do to improve vision.



7. Spectacles are the simplest way to correct short and long sight and help people see clearly.



8. When children get spectacles, there may be many reasons why they do not wear them. Friends, family and teachers can help to support them.



9. If an eye is hurt in an accident, wash with clean water and cover the eye with something clean and get help from a health worker fast.



10. When an eye looks pink or red, this might be conjunctivitis. The eye feels itchy, hot and sticky. Get help after a week if it is not better.

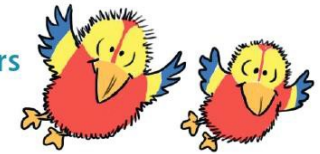


Twenty Messages

1. Keep eyes healthy by 1. Keeping hands, face and eyes clean and free from flies. 2. Eating food rich in Vitamin A like eggs and milk, yellow and orange vegetables, fruits and leafy greens 3. Being immunised 4. Getting help for itchy, red or infected eyes 5. Walking carefully when holding sharp objects.
2. Wash your hands properly before touching the T-zone on your face (eyes, nose and mouth), as this is where germs enter the body. Avoid touching the T-zone when you can.
3. To have a balanced healthy diet eat different foods of different kinds. Go, Grow and Glow for strong bodies and healthy eyes.
4. For the best eye health babies need just breast milk for the first 6 months. Breast milk contains Vitamin A.
5. Vitamin A pills can be given to young children once or twice a year. It helps protect their eyes.
6. Millions of parents all over the world take their children to be immunised to make sure they are safe, strong and protected from diseases like measles that can harm the eyes.
7. Our eyes are shaped like a small ball. The front part of the eye has a coloured circle, the iris and a smaller black part, the pupil.
8. The pupil lets in light, like a window, so that we can see. Structures inside the eye focus light so that we can see clearly. The eyelid helps to protect the eye and keep out light when we sleep. Tears carried by the eyelid across the eye, wash away dirt and help keep our eyes clean. That is why we blink. Eyelashes help to keep out dust, dirt and flies.
9. There are several different kinds of eye health personnel. Some treat eye diseases, others test eyes and choose ways to help a person see better.
10. Children who cannot see clearly may need an eye test. They may hold a reading book too close, look at the floor, seem shy, don't want to play or copy class notes from another book close by.
11. Some children are born with white dots in their eyes. This causes blindness and can be treated.
12. Eye checks find out why a person cannot see clearly and show eye health personnel what to do to improve vision.
13. Spectacles are the simplest way to correct short and long sight and help people see clearly.
14. Healthy children can have vision problems. As they get older, most healthy adults need spectacles or lenses to improve their vision.
15. Wearing spectacles to improve vision is vital for children and adults with vision problems to lead a normal happy life. Friends and family must encourage them.
16. When children get spectacles at first there may be many reasons why they do not wear them. Friends, family and teachers can help to support them.
17. If an eye is hurt in an accident, wash with clean water and cover the eye with something clean and get help from a health worker fast.
18. When an eye looks pink or red, this might be conjunctivitis. The eye feels itchy, hot and sticky. Get help after a week if it is not better.
19. Conjunctivitis spreads easily so a child with it must not touch others without washing hands properly. Do not share cloths used to clean infected eyes or share towels or bedding until the eyes are better.
20. If the eye has white or yellow sticky discharge, the germs might be bacteria. Antibiotic ointment must be used for 7 days or as instructed by a health worker.



Frequently Asked Questions About Our Posters



- **Where can I get the printed poster?** You cannot! You need to print it yourself. It is best printed in full colour on A3 size paper. Print the back too for reference or display.
- **Where to use it?** Schools, at home, health clinics, projects, clubs, religious groups etc.
- **Why are the faces of the people on the poster multi-ethnic?** This poster is for eye health and vision programmes around the world so we use multi-ethnic faces on all our posters.
- **Is it enough for children to just learn the messages?** The messages are designed as **doorways to discussion and action**. They are to understand and use, not just to memorise.
- **Do you have suggested activities too?** Yes! We have suggested activities in the pictures on this poster and we have a handbook full of activities linked to the messages.
- **How do I use the messages?** Be creative! Focus on one message or one topic for a week, month or term!
- **Can I add to, change, adapt, translate or simplify the messages?** Yes! **But check that your messages are accurate.**
- **Are there other important messages you have not mentioned?** Our messages are short and simple. You can create other short and simple messages for your programme
- **Some of the words and concepts look hard for children to learn.** Children love to learn new words and ideas. Take time to ensure they understand words and ideas that have lifelong importance, like: sclera, cornea, ophthalmologists, conjunctivitis, discharge, ointment. Ask children to practice and test each other until they know the words well.

Eye Health and Vision: What Can Children Do? A Basket of Ideas

- **EAT** lots of different fresh colourful food every day or week.
- **ASK** for more eggs, beans and orange and yellow fresh food like orange sweet potatoes.
- **WASH** your face and eyes with soap and help younger children too.
- (with an adult) **ADAPT** the EYE HEALTH AND VISION messages using your own words in your own language. **MEMORISE** the messages and **SHARE** the messages with many others.
- Create a **STORY** or **SERIES** of **IMAGINARY PICTURES** to help remember the messages.
- **FIND OUT** and **RECORD** the answers to questions like: Which mothers in your community breastfeed their babies and why? Are the children in our family immunised against measles?



For more information please contact Children for Health

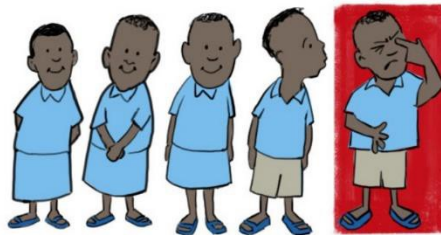
SAFE FROM TRACHOMA

What is Trachoma?

Trachoma is a bacterial infection which leads to blindness



1 in 5 People have Trachoma



How can we stop it?

Surgery
Antibiotics
Facial cleanliness
Environmental improvement

How is it spread?



Not using a latrine encourages flies that spread trachoma



Trachoma spreads when your face, hands and towels are dirty

Prevention



Washing face & hands with soap



Clean environment & covered latrine

Treatment

Antibiotics



Surgery

Acknowledgements

Principal Author: Clare Hanbury, Children for Health (www.childrenforhealth.org)

Chapter on Making Action Plans with Children To Promote Spectacles Compliance:

Sarah Newton and Clare Hanbury

Art Work: David Gifford, Inscript Design (www.inscriptdesign.com)

Type Setter: Melwyn Jensen

Editor: Amy Collins

Supported by: Peek Vision



With thanks to:

1. The Hesperian Foundation whose chapter on Problems with eyes and seeing provided good guidance (2019). https://en.hesperian.org/hhg/New_Where_There_Is_No_Doctor:Chapter_9:_Problems_with_the_Eyes_and_Seeing
2. V. Francis and B. Wiafe for *The Healthy Eyes Activity Book for Primary Schools*. Sight and Life, International Centre for Eye Health (2007) <https://www.cehjournal.org/resources/healthy-eyes-activity-book-for-primary-schools/>

May 2020

ISBN 978-1-911480-44-0



