

# Did You Say Screening, Test or Exam?

## Help! I'm confused!

From the "Help! I'm confused!" series

### Vision screening's confusion

*"My child's last eye exam was at school." "We had our eyes checked for free at the health fair." "I had my eyes last tested when I renewed my driver's license." "These typical answers have been heard too many times at a patient's first eye appointment when asked the typical first question: "When was your last eye exam?" Unfortunately, the public believes their eyes were examined and that a professional examination was not necessary. Vision screenings have misled the public for years."*

Dr. Floyd Mizener, Vice-President  
Vision First Foundation

### Vision screenings aren't eye examinations

Vision screenings can easily be confused with eye examinations. Vision screenings attempt to separate those with possible vision problems (fail) from those without (pass). Failed vision screenings are referred to an eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) for an eye examination. Vision screenings do not evaluate eye health and important vision skills needed for success in school.

### Test—the ambiguous word

"Have your vision tested" is the same as "Have your eyes checked." Is it a screening or an examination? "Test" is often used incorrectly. Only licensed eye doctors can perform tests during an eye exam.

### Did you know?

- Vision screenings missed between 32 and 63 percent of vision problems identified by eye examinations. (VIP Study by National Eye Institute 2005)
- It is estimated one-in-four children have a vision problem.
- Failure to have a child's eyes examined by an eye doctor places a child at risk with undetected eye and vision problems that could affect sight and everyday life.

### Looking beyond 20/20

Perfect vision is commonly described as 20/20 eyesight or clear visual acuity at 20 feet. An individual with 20/20 eyesight could have an eye or vision problem. Vision screenings miss what eye examinations find.

### Screenings not a substitute for exams

An eye examination by an eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) will give a diagnosis (e.g., normal, myopia) and prescribe treatment when indicated (e.g., glasses, vision therapy). During a comprehensive eye and vision examination, an eye doctor should evaluate: eye health; a refraction; visual acuity at both near and far; and the visual efficiency skills needed for success in school, sports, driving, and the modern workplace.

### Join the "Kids Eyes Count Campaign"

Follow these steps and be a part of our campaign:

1. **Know** that a vision screening is *not a substitute* for an eye examination.
2. **Make** comprehensive eye and vision examinations by an eye doctor part of a child's health care.
3. **Keep** eye care health and good vision habits a priority.

For further information, please visit the website:

[www.VisionFirstFoundation.org](http://www.VisionFirstFoundation.org)

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