

Low Vision Exams for Children and Teens

Frequently Asked Questions

How is a low vision exam different from a regular eye exam?

A regular eye exam checks your child's overall eye health. The doctor looks at different parts of the eye for signs of disease, damage, or other issues. The exam also checks for vision issues like nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism. If needed, the doctor may prescribe glasses.

A low vision exam at Cleveland Sight Center (CSC) is done by a specially trained optometrist for kids and teens who already have vision loss from a diagnosed eye condition or disease. This exam helps find the best tools, like magnifiers, lighting, and/or other aids, and adaptive techniques to support your child's vision. Unlike a regular eye exam, this one focuses on how your child uses their vision in daily life and finds the appropriate ways and/or devices to help them visually access their world.

Is my child a good fit for a low vision exam?

At our clinic, we suggest your child be at least 4 years old, able to sit through the exam and follow simple directions. This exam is for kids and teens with low vision who have trouble with daily tasks. For example, they might:

- May struggle with glare from different lighting environments and have trouble seeing in bright or dim light.
- Need to hold books or screens very close to see small print or fine details.
- Struggle to recognize faces, read signs or see the board at school from a distance.
- Find it harder to do chores, cook or enjoy hobbies like crafts, science projects and other life activities.

Cleveland Sight Center say if my child can drive?

Our clinic can perform tests to check if your child meets Ohio's vision requirements for driving. These tests include checking their peripheral (side) vision and how well they can read letters on an eye chart. However, the clinic does not decide if a child can drive—only the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) makes that decision. We can just share how their vision compares to Ohio's driving requirements.

How long does the exam take?

The exam lasts between 1 to 2.5 hours, depending on your child's age, needs, and how well they communicate with the doctor. Older kids and teens may also meet with a low vision occupational therapist (OT) to learn how to use recommended tools or assistive technology.

How do I pay for the exam and any recommended tools?

Cleveland Sight Center (CSC) accepts many insurance plans, including Medicaid. The Verification Team will review your health insurance details. If any issues arise, a member of the team will contact the parent to provide further information.

Insurance does not cover low vision tools like magnifiers, specialized lighting, or other low vision devices. Payment options include paying out-of-pocket, using CareCredit, asking for assistance from other agencies, or applying for financial assistance through CSC.