

NOT A HYPOTETICAL

This is the story of one of our foster care children who was adopted by the time the following events unfolded.

In the late 1990's an eastern Washington optometrist told a mother of a five-year-old child that the child had a "lazy eye," but would probably grown out of it. No further information was provided. By age six the child was in an assisted reading program.

By age seven the child had an IEP and continued to struggle in school; the parents had the child repeat half of the second grade. They continued to take her for yearly eye examinations.

By age 10 the parents finally learned the difference between "eye care" and "vision care" from the special reading school their daughter attended. At that point the child was demonstrating the wide range of poor vision skills listed on the attached 30 Questions Predictive checklist, scoring more than triple the number of point indicated for referral to a behavioral optometrist. They had never heard of vision therapy and never knew there were two good vision therapy clinics in their own community.

After three months of weekly in-clinic therapy the child's vision greatly improved and her school performance began to improve as well. The child was delighted by how much easier it was to read.

The Infant SEE program (www.InfantSEE.org) could have caught many of the vision problems of this Washington child and tens of thousands more while the children were infants. If the optometrists in our community and throughout our state checked carefully for focusing and tracking problems, and our children received early treatment for vision dysfunctions fewer of our children would be in special education, others would have better school performance and many would have fewer, or less severe, behavioral problems.

The AmeriCorps Children's Vision Care Project will closely examine the vision care needs of foster children served by the Toppenish Division of Children and Family Services to assess the scope of undetected vision dysfunctions in this vulnerable, high risk, group of children.

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30 Question Predictive Checklist

Name: _____

Date: _____ Age: 9

After you consider each question, mark the column that applies to the person you are assessing.	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	Score
Blur when looking at near	0	1	2	3	4	
Double vision, doubled or overlapping words on page	0	1	2	3	4	
Headaches while or after doing near vision work	0	1	2	3	4	
Words appear to run together when reading	0	1	2	3	4	
Burning, itching or watery eyes	0	1	2	3	4	
Falls asleep when reading	0	1	2	3	4	
Seeing & visual work is worse at the end of the day	0	1	2	3	4	
Skips or repeats lines while reading	0	1	2	3	4	
Dizziness or nausea when doing near work	0	1	2	3	4	
Head tilts, one eye is closed/covered while reading	0	1	2	3	4	
Difficulty copying from the chalkboard	0	1	2	3	4	
Avoids doing near vision work such as reading	0	1	2	3	4	
Omits (drops out) small words while reading	0	1	2	3	4	
Writes up or down hill	0	1	2	3	4	
Misaligns digits or columns of numbers	0	1	2	3	4	
Reading comprehension low, or declines as day wears on	0	1	2	3	4	
Poor, inconsistent performance in sports	0	1	2	3	4	
Holds books too close, leans too close to computer screen	0	1	2	3	4	
Trouble keeping attention centered on reading	0	1	2	3	4	
Difficulty completing assignments on time	0	1	2	3	4	
First response is "I Can't" before trying	0	1	2	3	4	
Avoids sports and games	0	1	2	3	4	
Poor hand/eye coordination, such as handwriting	0	1	2	3	4	
Does not judge distances accurately	0	1	2	3	4	
Clumsy, accident prone, knocks things over	0	1	2	3	4	
Does not use or plan his/her time well	0	1	2	3	4	
Does not count or make change well	0	1	2	3	4	
Loses belongings and other things	0	1	2	3	4	
Car or motion sickness	0	1	2	3	4	
Forgetful, poor memory	0	1	2	3	4	

20 – 24 points = Suspect

25 points or more = refer for care

Total Score =