HOW computers are affecting our vision and our children's vision?

Should you worry about how much time your child spends in front of the computer or tablet device every day?

Sitting for hours in front of a computer screen stresses a child's eyes because the computer forces the child's vision system to focus and strain a lot more than any other task. Janine says “parents need to be aware of the vision problems associated with long periods of computer work”.

Computer use demands fine motor skills from young eyes that are not well developed. Only when the visual system matures is a child better able to handle the stress of a computer on that system. Children may not be aware of how much time they are spending at a computer. They may perform a task on the computer for hours with few breaks. This prolonged activity can cause eye focusing and eye strain problems.

Children are very adaptable. They assume that what they see and how they see is normal — even if their vision is problematic. That's why it is important for parents to monitor the time a child spends working at a computer and make sure they have regular eye exams as directed by their optometrist or ophthalmologist.

1. Have your child's vision checked.
2. Encourage kids to take short breaks from the computer every 20 minutes to minimize the development of eye focusing problems.
3. Adjust the screen so the child is at least 30-40 centimetres from it.
4. Encourage outdoor and other physical activities and limit electronic media and computer use to less than two hours per day.

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