



When a child sees their world correctly, it boosts self esteem.

*“Some of these kids get this DAZED look about them, as if they are staring right past you.”*

## Q & A

**Q:** Dear Dr. Warshowsky: My child has 20/20 vision and yet he often rubs his eyes while reading. Could this be a problem?  
**A.** Morris, N.J.

**A:** Eye rubbing is a symptom of eye strain however, the only way to know for certain if a visual dysfunction is present is schedule a comprehensive eye exam with an eye doctor who assesses and treats functional visual and visual perceptual disorders. I suggest that you visit the web site at [www.covd.org](http://www.covd.org). The College of Visual Development web site can help you find a qualified eye doctor in your area.

If your child's standard vision test reports 20/20, it means that he is able to see clearly at 20 feet. On the other hand, if he has 20/40 vision, it means that he needs to stand as close as 20 feet to see what a person with normal vision can see clearly at 40 feet.

The 20/20 test does not only test how well he sees at reading and far distance. In fact, the 20/20 test fails to evaluate many other important aspects of normal vision such as eye focusing, eye coordination, eye teaming, eye movement, visual perceptual skills and color vision. A comprehensive Visual Assessment evaluates all of these including visual acuity.

## School daze and eye.

“Hey, hey, Johnny, can't you come out and play? Hey, Johnny, can't you come out and play today?” Unlike Elton John's eulogy to John Lennon, our Johnny will eventually be able to come out and play, but maybe not today. You see, Johnny just began third grade, and he is not able to get his homework done in time to play with his friends today.

Play time is a special time during which we sense all that life could be for us. It's time to fantasize, to dream the dreams that make us special. It's full of all the stuff that makes us children. For children that can't have this special time in their young lives, there grows a feeling of despair and hopelessness. It is the dreams of our youngsters today that will shape our future for tomorrow.

Many of these children who have trouble finishing homework, have difficulty in school and become frustrated. The frustration grows, especially after having been somewhat successful in earlier grades (i.e. first and second grade).

Very often these same children have eye muscle imbalances that limit how long they can look at something. In reading, the smaller the print and the more information that has to be looked at, the harder it will be to look, see and understand. Third grade is a typical time for children to have difficulty, because the print becomes smaller and the content read becomes more involved. Some of these kids get this DAZED look about them, as if they are staring right past you. What they are doing is relaxing their eyes, just as you might do at the end of the day. They seem to be daydreaming so that they won't get eye strain, or they are trying to take the eye strain away.

Eye strain is the result of two sets of eye muscles not working together. One muscle system controls focus, for clarity, while the other system controls the function of seeing single and not double. Once one system becomes affected, it will typically draw the other into dysfunction creating dysfunction of the two coordinating together. Classical systems of eye strain are eye rubbing, headaches after eye activities, double vision at any time, variable blurred vision, missing or substituting words while reading, difficulty finishing school work, and the most common symptom is consistent loss of place. There are nonreaders, who have no symptoms at all, simply because they avoid any situation which calls for them to read for any considerable length of time.

Vision Therapy is the preferred treatment for these kinds of problems. The success of the problem depends on the motivation of the team which includes the child, parents and Developmental Optometrist. If the condition is recent, and academic lags have not yet occurred, the procedure is quite simple, resulting in complete remediation. When the condition is of a long standing nature, academic and/or emotional concerns often become secondary problems which must be addressed along with the visual. Certainly the more involved the situation, the more involved the treatment must be. When more than one function is involved, the team must include the appropriate professionals that can affect each. Therefore, if academics are an issue, reading, learning and special education professionals might be resourced. Psychologists may be consulted if emotional concerns have been presented.

Johnny must be allowed to play with all the other kids. He must be able to imagine and fantasize, so that his dreams of today will fulfill society's dreams of tomorrow. John Lennon won't be able to play with us today, but our Johnny can. Many of John Lennon's dreams will be with us forever. Our Johnny's dreams must also be given the chance to be nurtured and survive today.



Success makes everyone happy.

[www.DrJoelWarshowsky.com](http://www.DrJoelWarshowsky.com)



Happy, confident and well balanced children are the goal. They are tomorrow's leaders!

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