

Protect Your Eyes from Harmful UV!

By Christine Cox, Choosy Kids Contributor

As I look around the playground, 9 out of 10 moms are wearing sunglasses, protecting their own eyes from harmful UV rays. However, I start to question why my children are the only ones who are wearing their sunglasses while running around playing with the other kids. Protecting a child's eyes should be just as important as putting on sunscreen before heading outside, eating wholesome meals and brushing your teeth twice a day. But why do parents avoid looking at the big picture of eye health? Just like learning the ABCs and 123s, Choosy says to protect your eyes from harmful UVs!

Whether you have a newborn baby or are 100 years old, protecting your eyesight should never get old. Finding the perfect pair of sunglasses should be just as important for children as it is for adults. Why? Because according to skincancer.org, children under age 10 are at a higher risk for skin and eye damage from UV rays. The skin on their eyelids and around their eyes is more delicate and vulnerable than adult skin. UV ray damage builds over time, so the sooner you start protecting your children's eyes from the sun, the lower their risk will be of ever developing future eye problems.

How do you find the best sunglasses for your little ones? Here are 5 helpful tips to keep eyes safe and to encourage your child to wear sunglasses:

1. Make sure you purchase sunglasses that are durable and protect against UV rays instead of just pretend plastic sunglasses. Look for sunglasses that are shatterproof and block 100% of the UV rays.
2. Let children choose their own pair. Choosy picked a purple pair and wears them constantly! There are sunglasses with super heroes, princesses, animals, prints and of course, come in multiple shapes, sizes and colors.
3. The bigger, the better. Big sunglasses are stylish now for moms, and they are for children too. The more sunglass lens and frame there is, the more the skin is protected around the eyes. But make sure the sunglasses are comfortable and stay on your child's face. There are super comfortable straps available to put on sunglasses to keep them from falling off little faces.
4. Wearing sunglasses is a learned "habit". My 1 year old will put on and take off his sunglasses repeatedly, but I always make sure I offer them, tell him how cool he looks in them, and never force him to wear them. I did the same with my 3 year old and now she wears her sunglasses whenever we are outside without me even prompting her. Her "sunnies" are stylish, comfortable and fun to her, but to me they are protecting her sight for years to come.
5. Sunglasses aren't just for the summer time. Remember to protect you and your children's eyes in the winter too as the reflections beating off of the snow can be even more harmful to eyes than when the sun reflects off of water. My 3 year old likes to wear big snow goggles in the winter time as they help keep her face 100% covered in the cold.

Do you wear sunglasses? If you have a child/children, do they? What are your tips on getting children to wear sunglasses?