Common Vision Terms Defined

Term	Definition	Example
Amblyopia am-blee-OH-pee-ah	Loss of vision when nerve cells in the visual cortex of the brain receive insufficient visual stimulation while sense of sight is developing; primary causes strabismus, cataract, and refractive errors.	Left eye Right eye
Astigmatism uh-STIG-muh-tiz-um	An irregular or uneven corneal curvature that causes distortion or blurring of vision for objects at any distance.	

Hyperopia hi-pur-OH-pee-uh	Medical term for farsightedness; the eyeball is usually shorter than normal, which may make it difficult for the child to focus on objects that are nearby. Light entering the eye focuses behind the retina.	HYPEROPIA (Farsightedness) Clear vision
		What hyperopia looks like
Myopia mi-OH-pee-uh	Medical term for nearsightedness; the eyeball is usually longer than normal, which may make it difficult for the child to clearly see objects far away. Light entering the eye focuses in front of the retina.	MYOPIA (Nearsightedness) Clear vision
		What myopia looks like

Refractive Error	Refraction is the bending of light rays. Refractive error occurs when parallel light rays are not brought to a sharp focus precisely on the retina, producing a blurred retinal image. Nearsightedness and farsightedness are "refractive errors".	
Strabismus struh-BIZ-mus	A condition in which the eyes are not aligned; one eye will appear straight while the other eye turns inward, outward, upward, or downward.	
Visual acuity	Visual acuity is a measurement of the clarity, or clearness, of vision when identifying black optotypes on a white background using specific sizes at a prescribed distance.	

Glossaries and information on eye terms and vision conditions are available at:

- National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness http://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/glossary
- American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus http://www.aapos.org/terms
- American Optometric Association http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/eye-and-vision-problems/glossary-of-eye-and-vision-conditions?sso=y
- American Academy of Ophthalmology http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/index.cfm

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