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Is Myopia Onset Occurring Earlier in Children

In 2004, an insightful study conducted on Taiwanese schoolchildren highlighted a disconcerting trend - myopia was beginning to manifest at younger ages, with the age of onset progressively decreasing over time [[1](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15008558/)].

A UK Biobank study published in 2022 corroborated these findings, indicating a concerning rise in myopic frequency, particularly in the youngest cohort [[2](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0260993)]. Regrettably, this troubling pattern continues, as evidenced by a Chinese study during the lockdown period, where children exhibited a significant increase in myopia, with the most profound impact observed in the younger age groups [[3](https://ep.bmj.com/content/108/1/51)]. Moreover, a comprehensive long-term study in Northern Ireland (NICER) revealed that the prevalence of short-sightedness among UK children has doubled in the last fifty years, with myopia now emerging at an even earlier age [[4](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/biomedical-sciences/research/optometry-and-vision-science/research/myopia-and-the-nicer-study)].

The implications of early myopia development are grave, as it tends to progress throughout childhood and adolescence. The younger the onset of myopia, the higher the risk of severe myopia, which may lead to various eye conditions, visual impairments, or even blindness in later life [[5](https://bjo.bmj.com/content/107/5/644)]. Naturally, parents are concerned about reducing the likelihood of their children developing myopia early or experiencing the more severe form of the condition.

Early and regular eye examinations hold paramount importance in identifying myopia at its nascent stage. While reversing myopia development is not feasible, interventions like the use of specialized lenses can effectively slow down its progression, reducing the probability of complications in the future. Concurrently, managing environmental factors plays a pivotal role in curbing myopia rates. Limiting screen time and encouraging outdoor activities have been consistently linked to lower myopia incidence [[6](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8837331/)]. Adhering to the '20-20-2' rule - taking regular breaks from near work, gazing into the distance, and spending a minimum of two hours outdoors each day - may significantly contribute to reducing myopia development [[7](https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/08/27/the-dramatic-rise-of-myopia-in-young-people/)].

In conclusion, the rise in early myopia development among children continues to be a pressing concern. Early identification, timely intervention, and vigilance towards environmental triggers are essential in mitigating the severity of myopia and safeguarding children's long-term eye health. By taking proactive measures, parents can potentially provide their children with a better chance of maintaining healthy vision and visual well-being throughout their lives.

**[Name of Business] is proud to support Myopia Focus**

Independent information on myopia and myopia management can be found on [myopiafocus.org](https://www.myopiafocus.org/what-is-childhood-myopia).

Please also consider signing this [change.org petition](https://chng.it/Ft25M75fpD) to get the NHS to recognise myopia as an ocular disease and improve funding for myopia management for children.

**Images:**

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A child and child looking at a tablet

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