THE VISION COUNCIL FOUNDATION

MYOPIA IN CHILDREN: WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

Background for reporters, from The Vision Council Foundation

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Myopia, or nearsightedness, is rising sharply among children worldwide. In 2020, an estimated 2.6 billion people globally were nearsighted, a figure projected to reach 3.4 billion by 2030. One in three children worldwide has myopia, and the World Health Organization projects that half the world's population may have myopia by 2050.

In the United States, roughly 30% of children and adolescents have myopia today. Prevalence among young adults has climbed from about 25% in the 1970s to more than 40% by the 2000s.

WHAT PROVIDERS ARE SEEING

The Vision Council's ***Focused inSights: Provider Approaches to Myopia Management*** survey of 293 U.S. optometrists, practice owners, and practice managers found:

- 68% of providers currently offer childhood myopia management, with an additional 11% planning to add it within 12 months.
- 91% recommend myopia screening at least once a year.
- Providers cite excessive screen time (82%), genetics (82%), and lack of outdoor activity (77%) as the leading risk factors for myopia onset.
- 86% cite cost of treatment as a major barrier to implementing myopia management; 56% cite parental understanding and 49% cite patient compliance as additional challenges.

A SHIFTING TREATMENT LANDSCAPE

Beyond corrective lenses, a newer category of treatments is designed to slow the progression of myopia rather than simply correct vision, including low-dose atropine drops, orthokeratology, multifocal contact lenses, and myopia control spectacle lenses.

The Vision Council's companion report, ***Focused inSights: Comparative Myopia Treatment Strategies Across the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and the E.U.***, found notable differences in access across regions. Myopia control spectacle lenses, one of the newer treatment categories, are approved in Canada, the U.K., and the E.U., but none are currently approved for sale in the United States. Canada has authorized four such lenses since 2021; the U.K. and E.U. have approved similar products since 2019 and 2020, respectively. In the U.S., two spectacle lens products have received FDA Breakthrough Device designation but have not yet received full approval.

Regulatory movement is ongoing: the European Commission approved a low-dose atropine drop for pediatric myopia in June 2025, and France became the first E.U. country to fully reimburse myopia control spectacle lenses that same month.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Both reports are part of The Vision Council's Focused inSights series. The provider survey was conducted June 16–July 4, 2025, with 293 respondents and a margin of error of ±6 percentage points. Full reports are available to media upon request by emailing media@thevisioncouncil.org.