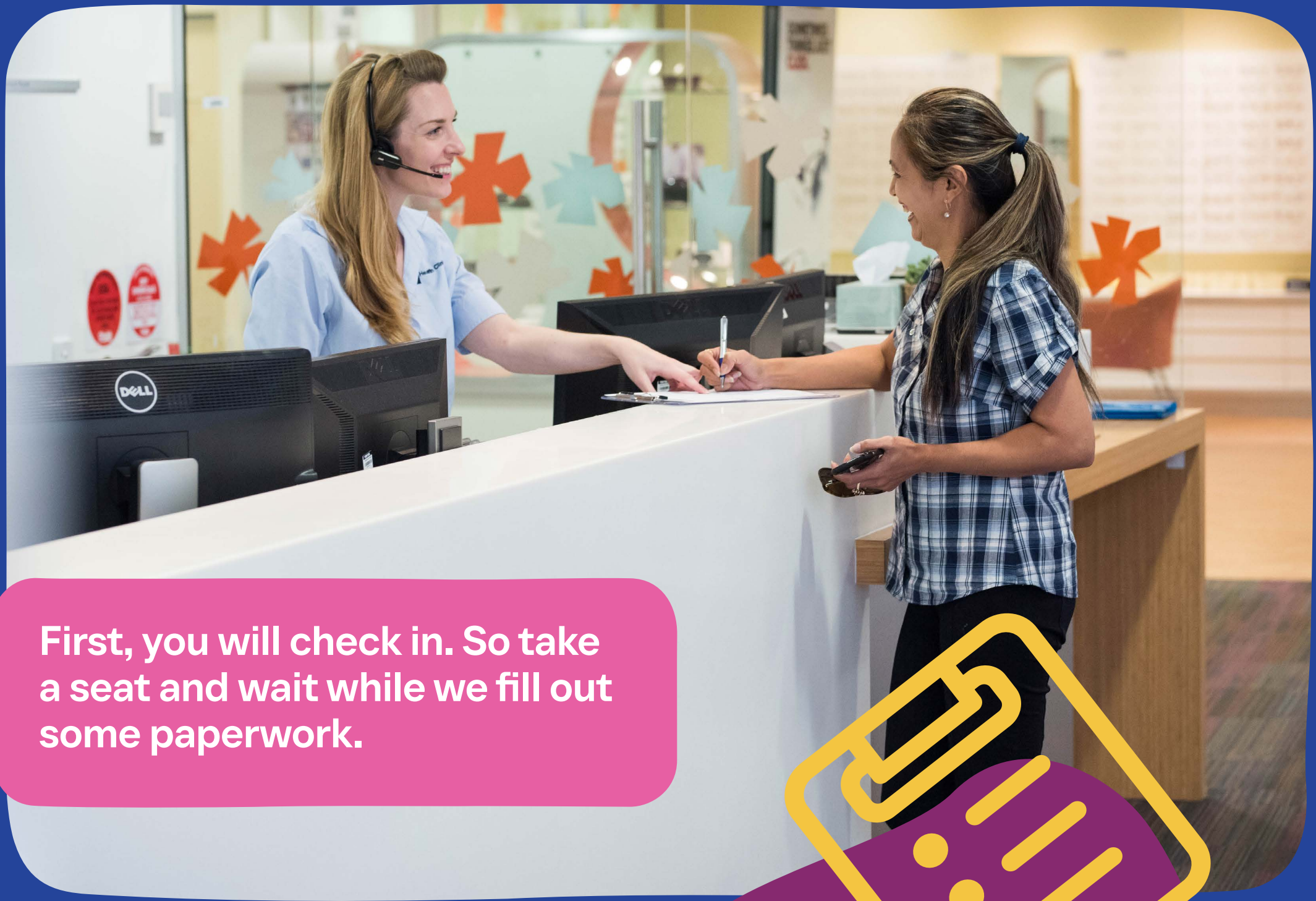
Welcome to the QUT Optometry Clinic

Here is a visual story to explain what might happen at your eye test today.



First, you will check in. So take a seat and wait while we fill out some paperwork.

Soon, one or two students will come to say hello. You will meet their supervising optometrist too. You will go to the consultation room and sit on a special chair. We will ask you (and any adults with you) some questions about what you can see and what you like to do.

We might ask you to read the eye chart and look at some pictures.


We might quickly shine a light into your eyes.

We might play some eye games with you to see how your eyes are working.

We might check that your eyes are healthy by looking at them with a microscope.

Sometimes we might put drops in your eyes that will make your pupils big. This is so that the optometrist can decide whether you need glasses and get a better look at the back of your eye. It will take 30 minutes for the drops to work so you can go for a walk outside, have a snack or go to the playground. It might be bright outside so bring your sunglasses. Things might also seem a bit blurry for the rest of the day but everything will go back to normal soon.

Later we may take photos or scans of your eyes. These scans will not touch your eyes, but they will come close to your nose.

If the optometrist decides you need glasses, you can try on frames and see what looks good on you. You can come back another time if you are tired.

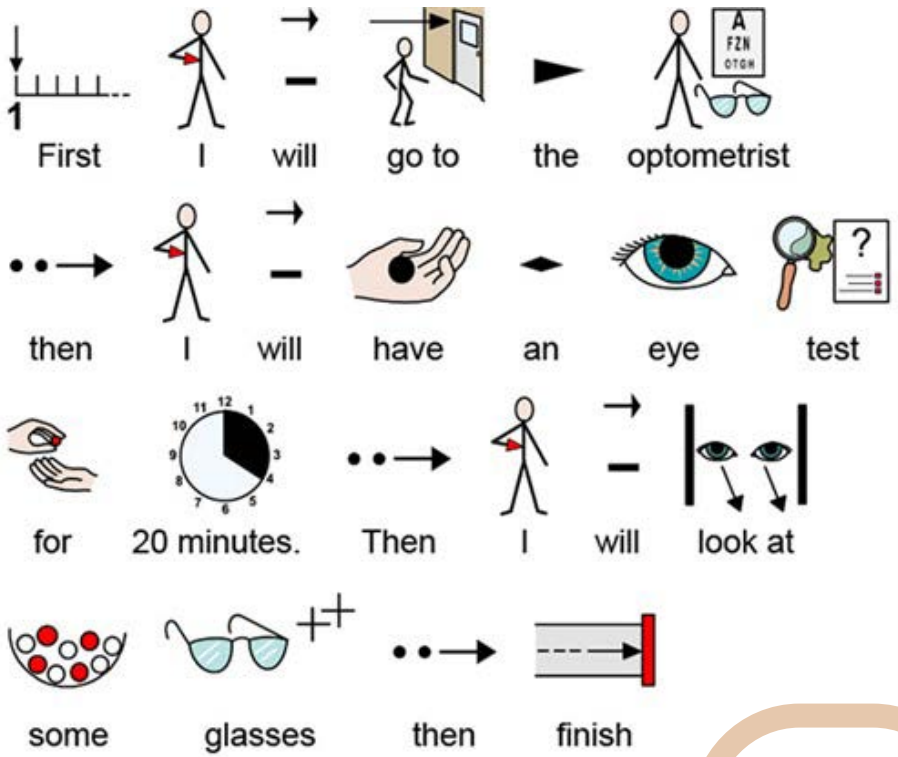

We may touch your face to make sure the frames fit properly.

We might not finish everything the first time we see you.

If we don’t, we can book back in to finish things off another day.

We’re looking forward to seeing you at the QUT Optometry Clinic.

Visual timetable story board



Senior lecturer, optometrist Dr Paul Constable, is the head of the autism optometric specialty clinic at Flinders University. With his vast experience, he offers some tips below when it comes to testing the eyes of a child with autism.

Dr Paul Constable's top 10 tips for optometrists treating patients with ASD

1. Letting the child familiarise themselves with the room and space will facilitate the test. The first visit may simply be dedicated to letting the child get to know what will happen. On subsequent visits you will be able to achieve a little more each time. Be prepared for multiple visits to complete an examination.

2. Time. Everything takes longer with a child on the spectrum—to process information, to make a response, to understand the process of the test.

3. Gain the attention of the child and establish an understanding of what is required of them. Make direct eye contact to ensure they are focusing on what you are saying. Being 'eye to eye' will help the child hold their attention on you. Physically holding their hand can also help draw their attention to you.

4. Listen and involve the parent or carer who will have strategies (words, gestures) to guide the child's attention and actions.

5. Talk slowly and in short, simple, direct sentences. For example, 'First sitting, then looking' or 'First eye one, then eye two'. The 'First X, then Y' is a strategy used by speech pathologists to develop communication, so this syntax is often understood by the child.

6. Talk to the parent or carer about what interests their child. It may be numbers, shapes or colours that can then lead the eye test. Parents or carers can often facilitate routine tests such as ocular motility and help establish vision using Cardiff or Kay picture cards. If the child likes to count, then ask them to count 'red' spots on the Ishihara plates rather than telling you the number.

7. Take turns when doing tests. 'First Mummy glasses on, then you'.

8. Be clear about how long the test will take and when it will end. A countdown clock in the room helps. The child will be reassured if they can see how many minutes remain and that there will be a clear end point.

9. A quiet, calm, uncluttered consulting room will help maintain the child's attention on one thing at a time.

10. Be sure both parent and child understand the need and effects of eye drops. Eye drops for refraction induce blur for two to three hours, are painful and to any child, cause distress. It is vital that this is understood by the child and may require the use of visual aids to illustrate what will happen.

Source: *optometry.org.au/workplace/eye-clinic-for-autistic-children-and-adults/*