



For Immediate Release

Make Your Child's First Test an Eye Exam

You can't see what your child sees. An optometrist can.

[Halifax] – August 20, 2004 - Parents getting their young children ready for their first day of school should think about more than just new shoes and a backpack, says the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO). To ensure children have all the basic tools they need to succeed in school, optometrists urge parents to have their child's eyes examined.

“Many children start school without seeing well at all,” warns Dr Dorrie Morrow, Chair of CAO's Children's Vision Initiative. “As many as one in six children has a vision problem that can affect their learning in school”.

Dr Erin Sheppard, a Bridgewater optometrist agrees. “Children rarely complain of vision problems, or are even aware of them.” “They just learn to cope,” explains Dr Sheppard “Some children are thought to have a learning or behavioural problem, when in fact, it is a vision problem that is the barrier to learning”.

The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends that children have a comprehensive eye exam before their third birthday and again before starting school and every one to two years after that, to ensure continued good vision. If your child is older, remember, any age is a good age to have an exam by an eye care professional.

“It is very important for children to be checked early before conditions such as lazy eye become a life-long condition” says Dr Erin Sheppard. “The sooner vision disorders are identified and treated, the greater the chance for success.”

Classroom learning is 80% visual, so if a child isn't seeing well, they're not performing up to their potential. In addition to a regular eye health exam, look for everyday signs that your child may need help, such as: avoiding close work or reading, losing his or her place when reading, complaining of headaches, squinting, or red, itchy or watery eyes.

Optometrists are highly trained doctors who can see vision problems coming, sound the warning and offer treatment. Please don't wait; make an appointment today.

For more information or to find an optometrist near you, visit the CAO website at:
www.opto.ca

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The Canadian Association of Optometrists represents over three thousand Doctors of Optometry, the primary eye care providers who specialize in the examination, diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention of diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye and associated structures, as well as the diagnosis of related systemic conditions.

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