



Children's Eye Health



**Book a
sight test
today!**



**Eye problems can
seriously affect your
child's future**

A short video about the benefits of early
sight testing for children is available at
www.optometrytoday.tv/teachers



September 2010

Dear Headteacher

Children's Eye Health

We recently contacted you about the importance of children's eye health. Poor eyesight can have a significant effect on children's ability to learn and on their behaviour, yet often goes unrecognised by teachers, parents and by the children themselves.

We are asking you to help by making sure all the children starting school this month are encouraged to see a local optician for a free NHS Sight Test, whether your school has a vision screening programme in place or not. Sight Tests are FREE for children under the age of 16.

The sooner that vision problems are detected, the better the outcome. Many childhood eye conditions such as lazy eye and squint can be treated if they are picked up early, as the eye and visual system are actively developing during the school years and if vision problems are identified and treated, it can make a difference that lasts a lifetime.

A few points that may be helpful:

- Children may not be aware of or may not be able to explain their vision difficulties
- A parent or teacher may not notice any problems
- Help towards the cost of glasses is available on the NHS for all children
- Toddlers and young children do not need to be able to read. Optometrists (opticians) are able to carry out an eye test using pictures

A short video explaining the benefits of early sight testing for children is available to view at: www.optometrytoday.tv/teachers

More information is available overleaf and I enclose a poster to remind parents of the importance of good vision. A children's eye health leaflet for parents is also available to download from the Association of Optometrist's website: www.aop.org.uk/campaigns

Yours faithfully,

Polly A. Dulley

Polly Dulley
Chairman - Optical Confederation Children's Campaign



Contacts and further information

The Government and the optical professions within and associated with the Optical Confederation are all signatories to the UK Vision Strategy to ensure eye health for all. This strategy sets out how eye care services can be improved, and was developed in response to the World Health Assembly VISION 2020 resolution, to eliminate avoidable sight loss by the year 2020. Visit the website at: www.vision2020uk.org.uk/UKVisionstrategy/

If you have any questions, require more information, or for more copies of the poster, please contact Anne Grenyer at childrenseyecare@aop.org.uk or telephone 020 7401 5316.

Transitions Optical's Eye Know Eye Care (EKEC) programme encourages Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians to come into your school to talk to children about the importance of looking after their eyesight with a talk in assembly or a lesson (linked to Key Stage 1 and 2). To download resources for your classroom, or find your nearest EKEC registered optician, go to: www.eyeknoweyecare.com

Parents and guardians can find a local optician by looking on the NHS websites:

England: www.nhs.uk/service directories/Pages/ServiceSearch.aspx
Scotland: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/NHS-Scotland/Boards
Wales: www.wales.nhs.uk/directory.cfm
Northern Ireland: bit.ly/a4Vbnw

