

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Prevent Blindness Asks Parents to Put Their Children on the Path to a Successful School Year

Prevent Blindness Declares August as Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month to Educate Public on the Importance of Healthy Vision for Kids

CHICAGO (July 14, 2016) – To help put children on the path to a successful school year, Prevent Blindness urges parents to address their child’s eye health needs. Prevent Blindness has declared August as Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness month to inspire parents to make their child’s vision health a priority.

According to data from the National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness (NCCVEH) report, “[Children’s Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues](#),” visual functioning is a strong predictor of academic performance in school-age children. In addition, uncorrected refractive errors in infants and preschool-age children are associated with developmental delays, as well as with clinically identified deficits in cognitive and visual-motor functions that may in turn affect school readiness. Vision problems can be treated successfully if detected early. Vision screenings along with complete eye examinations are two critical ways to identify possible vision problems and get children connected to treatment.

Children generally do not complain about problems with their vision. Eye problems that are not corrected may lead to a permanent loss of sight. Steps parents can take to ensure healthy vision include:

1. Watch your child while at play, and while looking at books, pets or other people. If something does not seem right, discuss this with your child’s doctor.
2. Talk with your child’s doctor about any family history of vision problems (such as “lazy eye”, a “crossed eye”, use of an eye patch as a child to correct vision, or need for eyeglasses with a strong prescription).
3. Ask at every well child visit if your child’s eyes and vision have been checked.
4. Ask for results of all vision screenings and make sure you understand what they mean.

5. A vision screening conducted by your child's doctor, daycare, or in their educational setting may result in a recommendation that he/she see an eye doctor to evaluate a problem found during the screening. If so, be sure to make and keep that appointment.
6. After the eye appointment, make sure all results are sent back to your child's doctor, daycare or school, and a copy is provided to you.

Unfortunately for many families, cost and access to eye care is a limiting issue. The [Affordable Care Act](#) mandates that all plans in the Health Insurance Marketplace include vision coverage for children. In most states, that includes one comprehensive eye exam and one pair of eyeglasses. Prevent Blindness offers additional information and a free fact sheet, "[The Affordable Care Act and Your Child's Eyes.](#)" Or, visit the Prevent Blindness [Vision Care Financial Assistance Information](#) resource.

Vision requirements for school enrollment vary by state. The *Children's Vision and Eye Health* report also includes information about state legislation and guidelines.

"Keeping children's eyes healthy has been part of our organization's mission for more than 100 years," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "Our goal is to provide parents and teachers with the tools and information they need to help ensure the vision health of our kids today and well into their future."

To support children's vision programs, [OCuSOFT® Inc.](#), a privately-held eye and skin care company dedicated to innovation in eyelid hygiene and ocular health, has agreed to donate 10 percent of all online sales to Prevent Blindness during August's Children's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month.

For more information on children's eye health and safety, the NCCVEH, or eye care assistance programs, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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