

# Protecting And Improving Your Child's Vision Two Ways

(NAPSA)—As a parent, you may wonder whether your preschooler has a vision problem or when a first eye exam should be scheduled.

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), infants should have their first comprehensive eye exam by an eye doctor starting at 6 months of age. Children should receive additional comprehensive eye exams at 3 years of age, and just before they enter kindergarten or the first grade at about age 5 or 6. School and pediatric vision screenings are not enough to pick up critical visual health and sight problems.

For school-aged children, the AOA recommends an eye exam every two years if no visual health problem is previously identified, and no vision correction is required. Children who need eyeglasses or contact lenses may need to be seen more often, and should follow their eye doctor's recommendations.

Eye exams for children are extremely important. According to Think About Your Eyes, a national public awareness campaign designed to educate the public on the benefits of vision health and to promote the importance of annual eye exams, 50 percent of children have not had an eye exam, and 1 in 4 school-aged children have vision problems. Early identification is crucial because if left untreated, some childhood vision problems can cause permanent vision loss.

A child's eyes are constantly in use at play and in the classroom. In fact, experts believe that as much as 80 percent of a child's learning occurs through his or her eyes. Yet, one in every six children around the world has some kind of visual defect, many of which require prompt correction.

## The Eyes Have It

To help parents of children in need of vision correction, global eyewear manufacturer Safilo Group, recently developed a Kids by Safilo eyewear collection devoted to 0- to 8-year-olds. These eyeglasses are not just scaled-down versions of adult eyewear. They're designed from a medical-scientific approach and engineered with advanced technologies and materials to suit children's specific eyewear needs.

Working with Società Italiana di Oftalmologia Pediatrica (SIOP) and in compliance with the design guidelines of the World Society of Paediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (WSPOS), the eyewear meets four requirements:

•**Safety:** The frames are flexible, safe and free from sharp surfaces and edges. And, made of



## Infants should have their first comprehensive eye exam at 6 months of age.

light, safe materials, these are biocompatible, hypoallergenic, non-toxic and washable.

•**Comfort:** The frames are lightweight and stable, thanks to the presence of a lower bridge—designed for a child's developing nose—and the special design of the temples with a horizontal bend. The enhanced design of the front allows the lenses to cover the child's entire field of vision, ensuring effective correction, and soft rubber nose inserts distribute pressure to avoid skin redness.

•**Resistance:** The frames are made with flexible, stable and washable materials so they won't get weak or twisted.

•**Aesthetics:** The frames were designed to be discreet on a child's face. The collection is based on a dedicated color approach featuring transparent frame fronts for the very youngest children—allowing the frames to virtually “disappear” on the face—while children ages 5 and up have a selection of more vivid colors and color/contrasts to go with their ever-evolving self-awareness and personal tastes.

As Prof. Paolo Nucci, professor of ophthalmology at the University of Milan and president of SIOP, explains: “These frames for children were designed with the specific aim of creating a product truly suitable for children, guaranteeing safe and durable eyeglasses for kids, created with bio-based materials and the best fit for the various age groups.”

Opticians', optometrists' and ophthalmologists' offices nationwide will begin carrying the Kids by Safilo line starting in May 2015.

## Sun Protection Facts

However good your child's eyesight, it's a bright idea to protect it from the effects of ultraviolet rays.

Children's eyes are more susceptible to UV rays than the eyes of adults because the lenses are



## It's never too early, or too late, to start wearing polarized sunglasses.

thinner, so 70 percent more UV rays reach the delicate retina.

Although studies show the eyes get 80 percent of their total lifetime exposure to the sun's UV rays by the age of 18, opening the door to a lifetime of eye problems such as painful sunburns, cataracts and even rare eye cancers, The Vision Council has found that only 48 percent of parents protect their children's eyes with sunglasses.

As the WSPOS advises, shielding children's eyes from excessive UV radiation is extremely important to prevent significant long-term damage. Whenever the child is outside, he or she should wear appropriate UVA- and UVB-blocking protective lenses in well-fitted, safe frames.

The lenses should block at least 99 percent of UVA/B light and should:

1. provide protection in the event of an impact;
2. leave little room for light to enter around the edges, and;
3. be comfortable to wear.

Polarized lenses, the experts add, often provide greater comfort from glare.

To that end, the Polaroid Kids polarized sunglasses collection uses Thermofusion technology for exceptional vision and glare-blocking protection by UltraSight lenses for superior optics, clear contrast, true colors and 100 percent UV400 protection. They also provide comfort, allergy-free materials and adjustable temple tips that fit a child's face and adventuresome lifestyle.

As the inventor of polarized lenses over 75 years ago, Polaroid's polarized lenses are durable and shock absorbing with a strong, scratch-resistant coating. They come in rich colors and fun styles that kids like, and are available from optical, department and sunglasses specialty retailers such as Solstice Sunglasses stores.

## Learn More

For further facts, go to [www.safilo.com/kids](http://www.safilo.com/kids), [www.Polaroideyewear.com](http://www.Polaroideyewear.com) and [www.Solsticesunglasses.com](http://www.Solsticesunglasses.com). To schedule an annual exam and find a local eye doctor, you can go to [www.thinkaboutyoureyes.com](http://www.thinkaboutyoureyes.com).