

Children's Health

Seeing Better, Learning Better

(NAPSA)—Here's something you can look at to help your children do better in school: getting their eyes examined by an eye care professional. Vision disorders are the most prevalent handicap among American children. One in 10 preschoolers and one fourth of school-age children have vision problems that can keep them from reaching their full learning and development potential.

Unfortunately, parents and teachers often have a blind spot when it comes to children's visual health. Even though 80 percent of what a child learns comes through vision, 86 percent of preschoolers don't get an eye exam before entering school because parents mistakenly think simple screenings typically offered by schools and pediatricians are enough. While screenings usually just test distance vision, a comprehensive eye exam tests for many of the basic skills kids need to reach their full learning and development potential.

The PEEK!: Preschool Eye Exams are Key program provides a list of basic skills not detected by simple screenings that preschoolers need to do their best in school:

- **Near vision**—the ability to see clearly and comfortably at 10 to 13 inches.

- **Distance vision**—the ability to see clearly and comfortably beyond arm's reach.

- **Binocular**—the ability to use both eyes together.

- **Eye movement skills**—the ability to aim the eyes accurately, move them smoothly across a page and shift them quickly and accurately from one object to another.



Studies prove a direct link between a child's vision and their learning ability.

- **Focusing skills**—the ability to keep both eyes accurately focused at the right distance to see clearly and to change focus quickly.

- **Peripheral awareness**—the ability to be aware of things located to the side while looking straight ahead.

- **Hand-eye coordination**—the ability to use the eyes and hands together.

Sears Optical has joined forces with the Vision Council of America, the National Association of Child Care Professionals and Children's World Learning Centers to create PEEK!: Preschool Eye Exams are Key. Now in its second year, the program was developed to raise awareness among parents and teachers about the critical need for children to get a comprehensive eye exam before starting school.

For more information on the PEEK! program, visit www.searsoptical.com/peek.