

Pointers For Parents

Add Eye Exams To Back-To-School Checklist *Good Vision Critical Tool For Learning*

(NAPSA)—A backpack bursting at the seams with new school supplies is a sure sign that summer is nearly over. Every item has been successfully checked off the list. Or has it? During the yearly ritual of back-to-school preparations, one item that shouldn't be overlooked is your child's eye exam.

According to Prevent Blindness America, more than 12.1 million school-age children, or one in four, have some form of vision problem—which may prevent them from succeeding in school. Early detection of vision problems is critical, considering 80 percent of all learning is achieved visually in the early years. Many kids who suffer from vision problems are frequently misdiagnosed with learning disabilities.

To make sure kids are able to utilize their most important learning tool—their eyes—the American Optometric Association (AOA) recommends that children be examined by a doctor of optometry or an ophthalmologist before entering kindergarten, and every two years through the age of eighteen to detect potential problems. Though many schools offer vision screenings, they are not a substitute for a comprehensive eye exam.

In a recent address to the AOA, former President Jimmy Carter spoke out on the necessity of comprehensive eye exams for all preschool children, noting that his own grandchildren were not diagnosed with vision problems until second grade.

Your Child's Eyes

"Thorough eye exams for school-age children are important because vision changes can occur without you or your child noticing," says Dr. Jeff Smith, vice president of professional services at Pearle Vision. "Most common eye problems such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, amblyopia (lazy eye) and astigmatism can be

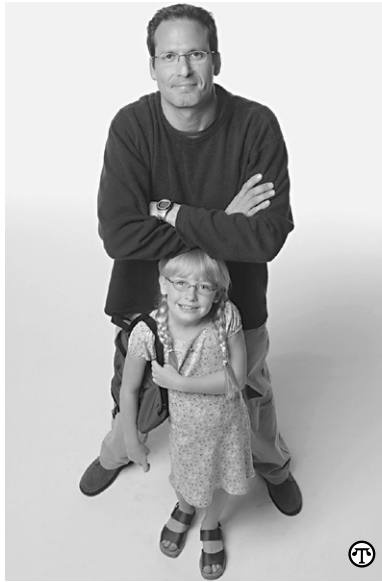


Photo Credit: Norman Seeff

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successfully treated when caught early."

As a parent, be alert for symptoms that indicate poor vision. If your child uses a finger to maintain their place when reading, holds reading materials close to their face, tends to rub their eyes frequently or complains of headaches, their vision may need correction.

Glasses Are Cool

The AOA reports that approximately 58.8 million children in the United States wear corrective lenses. And these days, with all the frame choices available, wearing glasses is now considered cool! Realizing that even their youngest customers have become savvy shoppers, Pearle Vision offers many styles for kids and teens that are at the height of fashion.

Pearle Vision carries a variety of frames geared especially towards kids, including styles from Candies, Converse and StrideRite. New this season is the

kid-friendly Nickelodeon line that features SpongeBob SquarePants, Blues Clues and Wild Thornberys—with each frame capturing the personality of a favorite Nick cartoon character.

In addition to brand names, another trend for kids is to mimic grown-up styles. Dan Griffin, brand management director for Pearle Vision, says that kids are becoming quite fashion conscious. "Some of the newest kids' styles are scaled-down versions of popular adult looks," he explains. "It makes wearing glasses 'cool' for kids."

Visiting an optical center where kids are able to try on a broad assortment of frames allows kids to choose glasses they like and will enjoy wearing. "We want them to feel confident wearing their glasses," states Griffin. "That's why Pearle Vision offers such a great selection of styles for kids of all ages."

KidSAFE™ Lenses

When it comes to your children's eyes, safety is a priority. Pearle Vision fits children with exclusive kidSAFE™ lenses, which are lightweight, impact- and scratch-resistant polycarbonate lenses designed to help protect your child's eyes at home, in the classroom and at play.

Now through September 28, Pearle Vision is offering free glasses for you or your child when an adult pair is purchased at regular price. (Contact any Pearle Vision store for details.) Comprehensive eye exams are available by independent Doctors of Optometry at or next to Pearle Vision stores throughout the U.S. Doctors in California are employed by Pearle Vision Care, a licensed Vision Health Care Service Plan and affiliate of Pearle Vision.

Pearle Vision has more than 800 locations nationwide. To locate a store near you, visit www.pearlevision.com or call 1-800-YES-EYES.