Eye on Health

Make Eye Exams Part Of Back-To-School Routine

(NAPSA)—Parents want their children to succeed in school, and most will do whatever they can to help—seeking out the necessary supplies, packing nutritious lunches, carefully checking homework. But have you thought about checking your child's eyes? Before the kids head back to school this year, consider taking yours to see an eyecare professional for a comprehensive eye exam.

Why? Your child's vision is a critical tool when it comes to learning. In fact, 80 percent of learning is achieved visually. However, Prevent Blindness America reports that one in four school-age children has some form of vision problem—which can hinder academic performance. And while many schools offer basic vision screenings, they are not a substitute for a thorough eye exam.

"Children can suffer from vision problems without showing any outward symptoms," says Dr. Jeff Smith, vice president of professional services at Pearle Vision. "Even if a child checks out 20/20 on the eye chart, they may still have a vision problem that needs correction. Many conditions such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, amblyopia and astigmatism can be treated successfully if caught early."

Left undetected, vision problems can not only lead to difficulties in learning, but also result in behavioral, physical and emotional problems. Many kids who suffer from vision problems are frequently misdiagnosed with learning disabilities.

The American Optometric Association recommends that children be examined by a doctor of optometry or an ophthalmologist

During the back-to-school routine, one item that shouldn't be overlooked is your child's eye exam.

before entering kindergarten, and routinely throughout their school years to detect potential problems. If your child requires glasses or contacts, they should be seen every 12 months, since prescriptions frequently change as vision matures along with your child.

As a parent, be alert for symptoms that indicate poor vision. If your child uses a finger to follow along when reading, holds reading materials too close, squints, rubs their eyes frequently, sits too close to the TV, complains of headaches—or if they're receiving lower grades than usual—their vision may need correction.

Glasses are cool

The American Optometric Association reports that approximately 58.8 million children in the United States wear corrective lenses. So if your child needs glasses, he or she will be in good company. And these days, there are so many great styles for kids to choose from.

Pearle Vision carries a variety of frames geared toward kids, including styles from Candies, Converse and StrideRite. The extremely popular Nickelodeon line features SpongeBob Square-Pants, Blue's Clues and the Wild Thornberrys—with each frame capturing the personality of a favorite Nick cartoon character. Pearle's new Kiwi line was created especially for teens looking for a fun, modern look.

Technological advances that have been used in adult frames are now available in children's frames, including flex titanium. The Flexibles-Youth line from Pearle Vision is made from the newest flexible frame material designed to withstand much of the stress children and teens put on their eyewear.

To keep eyes safe, shatter- resistant polycarbonate lenses are the best choice for kids. Pearle fits children with exclusive kidSAFE lenses, which also feature UV protection. The lightweight, scratch-resistant polycarbonate lenses help protect your child's eyes at home, in the classroom and at play.

Through Sept. 27, 2003, Pearle Vision is offering a special "Buy One, Get One" offer. Eye exams are available by either employed or independent doctors of optometry at or next to Pearle Vision stores throughout most of the U.S. Pearle Vision, Inc. does not employ doctors of optometry and does not provide eye exams in California. Pearle VisionCare, Inc., a licensed Vision Health Care Service Plan, provides eye exams in California. To locate the store nearest you, call 1-800-YES-EYES or visit www.pearlevision.com.