



Illinois Optometric Association

PARENTS: MAKE SURE AN EYE EXAM IS ON YOUR CHILD'S 'TO-DO LIST' FOR THE SUMMER A NEW LAW IN ILLINOIS REQUIRES IT

Is your child one of the 10 million children suffering from vision problems? A new state law aimed at cutting down on the number of children who unnecessarily suffer from eye and vision disorders took effect on January 1, 2008. All children beginning kindergarten or first grade for the first time are required to have an eye examination. Although parents have until October 15 to provide proof of an eye exam, doctors of optometry are asking parents to make appointments now for their children to avoid long wait times and to reduce the instances of eye and vision problems going undiagnosed and untreated in children.

The Illinois Parent-Teacher Association, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the Illinois Optometric Association and the Vision First Foundation joined forces to support this effort and to make sure that important improvements in children's eye health care were enacted. Thanks to this leadership, Illinois now leads the nation with the best eye health care requirements for children.

QUICK FACTS:

- Nearly 25 percent of school-age children have vision problems.
- Nationally, about 86 percent of children entering first grade do not receive an eye exam.
- About 60 percent of students identified as problem learners have undetected vision problems.
- Illinois joins Kentucky and Missouri as the third state in the nation requiring eye exams for children entering public schools.

WARNING SIGNS:

Simple changes in behavior could indicate that your child needs further evaluation by an eye doctor. Keep an eye out for these warning signs:

- Red eyes or eye lids
- Frequent eye rubbing
- Frequent headaches
- Turning or tilting of the head to use only one eye
- Avoiding detailed activities like coloring, puzzles or eye-hand coordinated tasks.

Eye exams for children entering school are critical for the early intervention needed to treat diseases and disorders that can lead to poor school performance and can ultimately affect a child's quality of life. Many vision problems are preventable or treatable if caught early on. A comprehensive eye examination from your local optometrist is a good way to make sure that your child is adequately prepared to learn with clear and comfortable vision.