



## Wisconsin's Children's Vision Law Attention Parents!

*80% of all learning during a child's first 12 years of life is obtained through vision.*  
–Vision Council of America

*Vision disorders are the fourth most common disability in the United States and the most prevalent handicapping condition in childhood.*  
–Preschool Children's Vision Screening Study Group

*8 to 12 million school age children are at risk from undetected vision impairments.*  
–National Eye Institute

Dear Wisconsin Parent,

Your child's ability to see clearly in school will have an enormous impact on their ability to learn. As a parent, you can ensure your child's academic performance is maximized from the beginning of their educational career by scheduling your child for a comprehensive eye health exam by an eye doctor. Please remember that vision screenings, which are offered in many communities and in many schools, are not enough. Although helpful, they DO NOT detect eye diseases or more complicated vision disorders in your children. Wisconsin optometrists believe undiagnosed and untreated vision and eye health problems represent one of the most serious, yet overlooked health issues facing our nation's children.

It is because of these potential threats to our children's vision and eye health and academic futures that the Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA), a statewide professional association consisting of doctors of optometry, has partnered with parents, school district administrators, school nurses, and other health providers to encourage students to receive the eye health and vision care they need. This partnership, known as the "Clear Vision, Bright Future" initiative, provides the opportunity not only to enhance the academic future of your child, but also to provide a strong foundation for those who may be at-risk for learning problems as a result of vision and eye health challenges.

Wisconsin doctors of optometry remind you *not* to assume that your child has healthy eyes and can see clearly in school, just because they don't say anything to you. That assumption could place your child's future eye health and school achievement at risk. Don't wait for signs of struggle to emerge; be proactive and have their eyes examined today.

### **Tips for parents scheduling comprehensive eye exams for their children:**

1. Schedule the exam early in the day, and if possible, at least 3-4 months before school starts
2. Let your child know that there won't be any shots or pain involved
3. Make a game of it; practice looking at pictures and making it fun

### **Wisconsin's Children's Vision Law**

Current Wisconsin law (Chapter 118.135) states that all Wisconsin Public School Districts are required to request that parents of Kindergarten children have their child's eyes examined by an optometrist or evaluated by a physician. Each school board or charter school shall provide pupils with the form distributed by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, for that purpose.

### **Financial Assistance for Eye Exams**

Many families in Wisconsin do not have insurance coverage for their children's eye exams and cannot afford such care. Member doctors of the WOA provide no-charge eye examinations for children who meet certain financial criteria. **Please contact VISION USA – The Wisconsin Project at (877) 435-2020 for more information or to request an application. You may also access and print applications for submission to the program by heading to the VISION USA page on the WOA website, <http://www.woa-eyes.org/vision-usa-public>.**

Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Michael Tashner  
President, Wisconsin Optometric Association