

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eye Problems That Are Detected and Treated Early Can Help Kids in the Classroom and Beyond

Prevent Blindness Declares August as Children's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month to Educate Public on the Importance of Healthy Vision for Kids

CHICAGO (July 20, 2017) – As children in most parts of the country head back to school, Prevent Blindness, the nation's oldest non-profit eye health and safety group, asks all parents and caregivers to set their child on a path to success in the classroom with a certified vision screening or eye exam.

More than one in 20 preschool-age children and one in four school-age children have a vision disorder. The National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness (NCCVEH) issued a comprehensive report, "[Children's Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues](#)," detailing the link between healthy vision and the impact it may have on learning:

- Visual functioning is a strong predictor of academic performance in school-age children.
- Uncorrected refractive errors in infants and preschool-age children are associated with developmental delays, as well as with clinically identified deficits in cognitive and visual-motor functions that may in turn affect school readiness.
- Vision disorders of childhood may continue to affect health and well-being throughout the adult years.

Prevent Blindness has declared August as Children's Eye Health and Safety Awareness month to inspire parents to make their child's vision health a priority. Prevent Blindness [recommends a continuum of eye care for children](#) to include both vision screening and comprehensive eye examinations. All children, even those with no signs of trouble, should have their eyes checked at regular intervals. Any child who experiences vision problems or shows symptoms of eye trouble should receive a comprehensive eye examination by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

Children generally do not complain about problems with their vision. These problems may range from common refractive errors, such as nearsightedness (myopia) and farsightedness (hyperopia), to serious eye conditions including:

[Amblyopia or "lazy eye"](#) – has many causes. Most often, it results from either a misalignment of a child's eyes, such as crossed eyes, or a difference in image quality

between the two eyes (one eye focusing better than the other). In both cases, one eye becomes stronger, suppressing the image of the other eye. If this condition persists, vision from the weaker eye may become useless. Amblyopia is found in about 2 percent of 6- to 72-month-old children and is the most common cause of vision loss in children.

[Strabismus or “crossed eyes”](#) – a condition where eyes are misaligned, or do not line up with each other. This problem is caused when the muscles do not work together. Between 2 and 4 percent of children under the age of 6 years have strabismus. Strabismus may eventually lead to amblyopia.

[Astigmatism](#) – an irregularity in the shape of the cornea or lens that causes blurry vision at all distances if not corrected. Between 15 and 28 percent of children ages 5 to 17 years have astigmatism, depending on the diagnostic threshold used. Children who have myopia or hyperopia are more likely to have astigmatism.

“The good news is that many vision problems in children can be treated successfully if detected early,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “Prevent Blindness provides free information on a variety of vision health topics for kids, and partners on many fantastic programs that provide free exams and glasses for those who qualify. We encourage the public to contact us for more details on ways to keep children’s eyes healthy.”

To support children’s vision programs, [OCuSOFT® Inc.](#), a privately-held eye and skin care company dedicated to innovation in eyelid hygiene and ocular health, has agreed to donate 10 percent of all online sales to Prevent Blindness during August’s Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month.

For more information on children’s eye health and safety, the NCCVEH, or [financial assistance programs](#), please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation’s leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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