

**Book Your Child's Back-to-School Eye Exam***Ontario Reminding Parents about the Importance of Vision Care*

September 18, 2017 1:00 P.M.

As the new school year begins, Ontario is reminding parents to make an optometry appointment for their children.

Eighty per cent of classroom learning is visual. An annual comprehensive eye exam can identify vision problems and treatment options to help students reach their full potential. Children who have trouble seeing can encounter difficulties at school because their motor skills, social development, attention span and ability to read, write and learn may be affected.

Some conditions such as lazy eye are most effectively treated at a young age. The Ontario Association of Optometrists recommends that every child have their first eye exam at 6 months of age to ensure proper vision development, again at 2 to 3, and subsequently every year thereafter.

Contact your optometrist if you have concerns about your child's vision or notice any of the following behaviour:

- Does not make eye contact
- Closes or covers one eye
- Squints or frowns when looking far or near
- Rubs or touches their eye(s) a lot
- Blinks more than usual
- Reacts strongly to light
- Turns or tilts head when viewing objects
- Trips, falls or bumps into things often.

To ensure your child gets the best start to learning, Ontario is encouraging parents to schedule their child's annual eye exam at the beginning of each school year. OHIP covers annual eye exams by an optometrist or physician for anyone under the age of 20.

Ontario is increasing access to care, reducing wait times and improving the patient experience through its [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care](#) and [OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare](#) - protecting health care today and into the future.

## QUOTES

" Annual comprehensive eye exams are important, especially since one in four Ontario students has an undetected vision problem that can impact their ability to learn. I encourage all parents to schedule an annual OHIP-covered optometry appointment at the beginning of each school year to give their children a healthy start to their education"

- Dr. Eric Hoskins

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

" Vision problems that go undetected can negatively impact a student's learning experience. With the start of a new school year, we encourage parents to schedule an eye test for their children."

- Mitzie Hunter

Minister of Education

## QUICK FACTS

- Beginning January 1, 2018, Ontario will provide free prescription drug coverage for children and youth aged 24 and under, regardless of family income.
- One in four school-aged children has an undetected vision problem that is affecting their learning.
- Only 11.5 per cent of children under the age of 4 and 22.6 per cent of children under the age of 6 have ever been to an optometrist for an eye exam.

## LEARN MORE

- [Find an optometrist near you](#)
- [OHIP coverage for eye care services](#)

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