

Eye See...Eye Learn

Eye See...Eye Learn (ESEL) is a program dedicated to the prevention, early detection and management of eye and vision problems in preschool children. Only members of the Ontario Association of Optometrists are eligible to participate in the Eye See...Eye Learn program. Optometrists who agree to participate in this program will have their name and office contact information included in the informative brochure that will be provided to the parents of all kindergarten students in the Hamilton-Wentworth school district, as well as posted on the Eye See...Eye Learn website.

The OAO recognizes that vision is a dominant process in a child's growth, development and education. In fact, 80% of learning in the first 12 years of life occurs through the intake of visual information. Uncorrected vision impairments in childhood can lead to life-long deficiencies in learning skills and performance. The first Eye See...Eye Learn program was run in 2003 in Alberta. The program is now running in every region of Alberta and is being adopted other provincial associations across Canada.

The *Eye See...Eye Learn* Program underscores the importance of diagnosing and treating vision problems early, through a comprehensive eye examination by an optometrist. The *Eye See...Eye Learn* pilot project will take place in Hamilton from September 2009 to June 2010.

Its goal is to significantly increase the number of junior and senior kindergarten children examined within their first year of school and to track the incidence of vision problems in this population. The first pair of eyeglasses, if prescribed, will be provided free of charge, through the generosity of our industry sponsors, HOYA and BO OPTIK, and participating OAO members. The program will reach an estimated 4000 students in 150 schools in the region. Our goal is to have up to 50% of these children receive an eye examination during the pilot period.

The Ontario Association of Optometrists is proud to have worked with local teachers, parents, CNIB, best start and early years, local optho and physician, and other healthcare stakeholders, to develop Ontario's Eye See...Eye Learn pilot program.

Target Age Group Policy

The ESEL pilot will target all children at their first entry into the school system. The majority will be Junior Kindergarten students. Senior Kindergarten students who did not participate in Junior Kindergarten will also participate in the program.

Optometrist Participation Policy

Optometrists who sign onto the program will provide examinations and glasses for the ESEL program. There will be no separation. Children who require glasses must get them at the office where their examination occurred. Children will not be able to see a non ESEL doctor for an examination and then come to an ESEL office to receive glasses.

Optometrists who participate in the program will bill OHIP for the examination. They will also have to use Interim Federal Health Branch to bill for examinations in the absence of OHIP coverage. The procedure to bill these different insurance providers will be provided in the optometrist participation package.

If an optometrist identifies a condition that requires additional treatment that isn't covered through OHIP, the parent or guardian will be informed of the reason for the suggested treatment and the cost involved so they can make an informed decision. Areas of optometry where this situation could arise might involve low vision aids, binocular vision therapy, visual information processing testing, visual information processing therapy, and contact lens therapy. The optometrist will have to provide the list of all participating ESEL doctors to the parent or guardian so the patient has the right to compare the costs of the recommended therapy at different offices if they choose to do so. The parent would also have the right to refuse the recommended treatment.

Glasses Partnership Policy

Each child who participates in the ESEL pilot will be eligible to an industry sponsored pair of glasses. The glasses will be of the best quality available for the prescription using the phoenix material for impact resistance. Lenses will be coated with anti reflection coating, anti scratch coating, oleophobic coating, hydrophobic coating and warranty from manufacturer's defects on frame and lenses for two years.

If a parent requests a frame that isn't in the samples provided in the program, they will have to purchase the glasses themselves.