



Don't Let "The Blur" Stand in the Way of Children's Learning

The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) urges regular comprehensive eye exams for children with a new awareness campaign.

Ottawa, August 1, 2026 – Ensuring every child is set up for success in the classroom, eye exams play a critical role in this success. This is why CAO is launching its digital awareness campaign to address children's vision care and the rising epidemic of myopia. Raising public awareness about the importance of regular eye exams for early detection remains crucial to improving eye care outcomes for Canadians, from toddlers to seniors. Unfortunately, eye health often doesn't always receive the same level of attention as other routine health care.

"Children rarely realize anything is wrong with their vision – they assume everyone sees the world the way they do, so it often goes unspoken", says Dr. Allison Scott, CAO President. "That's why parents are so often surprised when we diagnose a vision problem. A comprehensive eye exam is the surest way to catch these 'invisible' issues early – and early detection is what gives a child the clear vision they need to thrive at school and beyond".

CAO's campaign aims to boost public awareness about children's vision care through a simple yet potent message: Myopia Can Hide in Plain Sight. It will run throughout August on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube in English and French, and is supported by [New Brunswick Association of Optometrists](#), [Nova Scotia Association of Optometrists](#), and [The Prince Edward Island Association of Optometrists](#), and industry sponsors - [Alcon](#) and [CooperVision](#).

It is never too soon to see an optometrist

As a child grows, so do their eyes, and eye conditions can develop quickly – so it is important to set a baseline as soon as possible. Optometrists frequently encounter

'invisible' eye issues, especially myopia a.k.a nearsightedness – an increasingly common eye disease among children.

This is why the CAO recommends that parents schedule comprehensive eye exams for their children starting at six to nine months, then again between the ages of two and five years, and annually thereafter to age 19. After 19, eye development stabilizes, allowing eye exams every two years for healthy adults with no known eye conditions.

Eye exams are crucial, even if no symptoms are evident, to catch potential issues early and ensure timely intervention.

Fighting Myopia, one of the leading causes of vision loss in the world¹

Detecting myopia early on means taking measures right away to halt or slow the progression. People with myopia will have trouble seeing distant objects, such as road signs, whiteboards, movie screens and TVs. Myopia has both a genetic and environmental component, including increased near work and screen time among children.

Research shows that myopia occurs at earlier ages, starting in childhood (6-7 years of age) and progressing at a more rapid rate than in previous generations. This is concerning, given that high levels of myopia can lead to sight-threatening conditions, including retinal detachments, cataracts, glaucoma, and myopic maculopathy. By 2050, the prevalence of myopia is estimated to increase to 50% of the world's population².

"We know that clear vision is the cornerstone of a child's ability to learn, grow, and build confidence," according to Vanessa Johari Hansen, Country Business Unit Head, Vision Care, at Alcon Canada. "Alcon is proud to support the Canadian Association of Optometrists' campaign, empowering families to prioritize regular comprehensive eye exams, so children can See Brilliantly and Learn Brilliantly."

Focusing on prevention, early detection and timely treatment of vision problems set the foundation for lifelong eye health, and beyond.

"Myopia can significantly impact a child's ability to engage fully in daily life, even in the short term. While correcting vision is important, it's only part of the solution. Myopia often progresses as children grow," said Enrique Contreras, Country Manager at CooperVision Canada. "As a global leader in myopia management for children, we are

¹ Bourne RR, Stevens GA, White RA, Smith JL, Flaxman SR, Price H, et al. Causes of vision loss worldwide, 1990-2010: a systematic analysis. *Lancet Glob Health*. 2013;1(6):e339-49.

² Holden BA, Fricke TR, Wilson DA, Jong M, Naidoo KS, Sankaridurg P, et al. Global Prevalence of Myopia and High Myopia and Temporal Trends from 2000 through 2050. *Ophthalmology*. 2016;123(5):1036-42.

dedicated to offering innovative solutions designed to slow that progression, helping to reduce the risk of serious vision complications later in life.”

Maintaining good habits beyond the optometrist’s exam room will also help minimize the impact of myopia. Spending more time outdoors and limiting screen time are beneficial for healthy development, both for ocular health as well as overall health.

Visit: opto.ca/the-blur for more about CAO’s awareness campaign.

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About the Canadian Association of Optometrists

The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) is the national voice of optometry. Optometrists are independent primary health care providers and represent the front line of vision health. Optometrists practice in a range of settings: most work in private practice, others work in clinics, hospitals, community health centres, corporate optometry, research, teaching, and administration. Recognized at home and internationally as a leading advocate for the profession, CAO provides leadership and support to its +8,400 members (Optometrists, Students, and Optometric Assistants) to enhance the delivery of healthy eyes and clear vision for all Canadians. For more information, visit www.opto.ca.

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About Alcon

Alcon helps people see brilliantly. As the global leader in eye care with a heritage spanning over 75 years, we offer the broadest portfolio of products to enhance sight and improve people’s lives. Our Surgical and Vision Care products touch the lives of more than 260 million people in over 140 countries each year living with conditions like cataracts, glaucoma, retinal diseases and refractive errors. Our more than 25,000 associates are enhancing the quality of life through innovative products, partnerships with Eye Care Professionals and programs that advance access to quality eye care. Learn more at www.alcon.ca.

About CooperVision

CooperVision, a division of CooperCompanies (Nasdaq: COO), is a global leader in contact lens innovation, dedicated to advancing vision at every stage of life. The company offers one of the industry's most comprehensive portfolios of soft and specialty contact lenses—including daily disposable, two-week and monthly options—with high-performance materials and optics across spherical, toric, and multifocal designs. With a strong heritage of addressing complex vision challenges such as childhood myopia, astigmatism, presbyopia, and irregular corneas, CooperVision combines purposeful research and development, state-of-the-art manufacturing, and deep practitioner partnerships to deliver clinically advanced solutions. Decades of experience and insight continue to shape the eye care profession and create meaningful advantages for both practitioners and wearers. For more information, visit www.coopervision.ca.