

From: [Leah D Nixon](#)
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Subject: Ferris Eye Center Encourages Check Ups
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Included below is a press release regarding tips on how to give your youngster the best chance to perform to his or her potential from the Michigan College of Optometry's University Eye Center at Ferris State University. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Eye Center encourages vision screening for school-age children

BIG RAPIDS – It's that time of year again, when parents begin to enroll their children in preschool or kindergarten and are nervous about how they will do in a new environment with new challenges. One way to make the transition a little easier is to ensure your child doesn't have a vision problem.

In celebration of Save Your Vision Month, the Michigan College of Optometry's University Eye Center at Ferris State University has a few tips to share on how to give your youngster the best chance to perform to his or her potential.

"It's very important to share in activities with your toddler that will allow important visual developmental skills to occur," says Dr. Mark Swan, chief of Pediatrics and Binocular Vision Service at the Michigan College of Optometry. Activities such as playing catch or rolling a soft ball across the floor, stringing beads, coloring and finger painting are all wonderful things to do with your toddler to enhance vision development in youngsters, adds Swan.

Good vision is fundamental to reading, and reading is essential to learning. Reading with your child on a regular basis is an excellent way to teach good reading habits as well as specific reading skills. However, signs of squinting, closing or covering one eye, holding a book too close, tilting of the head to one side or rubbing of the eyes repeatedly may indicate a vision problem.

"At the University Eye Center we recommend children be given a comprehensive eye exam at the age of 1, 3 and 5, and then annually throughout school," notes Swan. "Regular vision screenings are great at indicating early problems with seeing distance, but they miss other critical vision deficiencies that can affect a child's learning, which a comprehensive exam can detect."

For example, he says, a child who checks out 20/20 on an eye chart may still have vision problems that need to be corrected. A comprehensive eye exam will measure a number of visual skills that are critical to a child's healthy vision, including using both eyes as a team, the ability for the eyes to focus properly when reading or viewing a computer, the ability for the eyes to move properly when reading, and a thorough assessment of eye health.

Swan earned his doctoral degree in Optometry at the Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University. He also earned a master's degree in Reading Disabilities at the University of California at Berkeley School of Education. Additionally, he is a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and president of the Michigan Optometric Association.

To learn more contact the University Eye Center at (231) 591-2222 or visit www.ferris.edu/mco.

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