



First Insight is among Nebraska optometrists offering free vision assessments up to three years old. Governor Heineman will sign a proclamation naming October SEE TO LEARN® Month in Nebraska on Oct. 6.

By Ashleigh Noyes

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According to the Nebraska Foundation for Children’s Vision, 20 percent of children entering kindergarten have an undetected vision problem –and this number increases to more than 30 percent by the time those children graduate from high school. Most don’t know they have a problem.

Without early detection and treatment, many of these vision problems affect learning, because more than 80 percent of learning is done visually.

To combat this problem, and catch vision disorders early, participating Nebraska optometrists offer free vision assessments to any 3-year-old through the See To Learn program.

First Insight Eyecare offers free vision assessments to all children one month of age up to three years.

These assessments are offered at all three of their current locations year round.

Over the course of the last year, between the three local clinics, roughly 45 children were brought in for free vision assessments.

When speaking about these statistics, Dr. Eric Gengenbach said, "There are nowhere near enough families taking part in this great opportunity for free vision assessments. So many eye disorders can be detected at this early age.

"Our hope is to help educate families with young children and give them the opportunity to possibly prevent future problems in the vision of their children by offering these free assessments.

"The See to Learn program is the best in which we are involved concerning children for the simple fact that with this program we are able to possibly save a child's sight."

According to Dr. Gengenbach, these early age assessments are extremely important for the visionary health of a child.

If a lazy eye or other eye disease is detected early enough, it can prevent other sight threatening diseases.

If lazy eye is detected and treatment is started before or near the kindergarten age, a child has a significant chance of complete vision correction.

A child's vision is not something that should be taken for granted, he said.

Governor Heineman will sign a proclamation naming October SEE TO LEARN® Month in Nebraska on Oct. 6.

While Nebraska optometrists will be doubling their efforts to help children in October, SEE TO LEARN® is a national, year-round program where optometrists provide free vision assessments for three-year-old children to help make sure they have the necessary visual skills to perform to their academic potential.

They also work to educate parents and others about the warning signs of vision problems in children of all ages.

The Nebraska Foundations for Children's Vision, the Nebraska Optometric Association and the Eye Care Council work to address the cost barrier that exists with ALL of health care by offering the See To Learn program in Nebraska.

Almost 10,000 three-year-old children across Nebraska have received free vision assessments since 1997.

For more information about SEE TO LEARN® visit the Council's web site at www.seetolearn.com or the NFCV site at www.nchildrensvision.org.