
PRESS RELEASE

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS (NLAO) LAUNCHES THE EYE SEE... EYE LEARN PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH NL GOVERNMENT AND ESSILOR VISION FOUNDATION CANADA

ST-JOHN, February 2, 2021 –NLAO is pleased to announce the launching of the *Eye See... Eye Learn* Program in the province, with the support of the Government of NL and Essilor Vision Foundation Canada. The program will provide an eye exam for any 4 and 5 year-old children not covered under private insurance when preparing for kindergarten.

Dr. Sarah Hutchens, President, NLAO, says “As many as one in four school age children have visual problems and 60% of children with reading difficulties have undetected or uncorrected vision problems. When you consider that up to 80% of learning is dependent on vision, the importance of maintaining a healthy visual system becomes clear.”

“Studies have shown that 86% of children under the age of 6 have never had a comprehensive eye exam. Our foundation is working with school districts across Canada, and these initiatives discover 25% of children who have uncorrected poor vision in school. Our organization is thrilled by this new project and congratulates both NLAO and the Government of NL for their engagement in our fight against poor vision”, explained Simon Robert, Executive Director of the Essilor Vision Foundation Canada.

A healthy functioning visual system affects every aspect of a child’s development and learning. A vision screening during a pre-school check up is only able to identify a limited number of vision issues. There are many other visual impediments to learning that cannot be identified through a screening alone.

It is recommended that children have their first eye exam at the age of 6 months, at age three, age 5 (prior to entry to kindergarten) and annually thereafter.

How the program works?

The “Eye See Eye Learn” Program will provide a full eye exam for children who do not have private health insurance that covers the cost of a full eye exam. In the case of partial coverage, the program will cover a co-payment up to a maximum agreed amount. An authorization form is required to participate in the *Eye See Eye Learn Program*. This form will be available on NLAO website (www.nlao.org). Parents and guardians will be able to print the form, find an Optometrist near them and make an appointment before the child starts school as part of the program. If required, the NLAO will provide one pair of glasses, courtesy of Essilor Vision Foundation Canada, a corporate partner of NLAO.

With the support for a Children’s Vision Program, Dr Hutchens says “Every child will have access to a full eye examination by a Doctor of Optometry before entering kindergarten. Good vision is essential for students to reach their full potential. A comprehensive eye exam by an Eye Doctor will diagnose visual health issues and ocular conditions. Many of these issues, if detected while the child’s vision system is still developing, can be corrected.”



About NLAO

The NLAO is the professional association that represents Doctors of Optometry in Newfoundland and Labrador. We foster excellence in the delivery of vision and eye care services through information, programs and services that promote and enhance vision care in the province. (www.nlao.org)

About Essilor Vision Foundation Canada

The Essilor Vision Foundation in Canada is dedicated to building awareness of the importance of good visual health, bringing access to vision care to underserved communities to correct poor vision, and advocating to make vision care a priority and a right for all Canadians. (<https://seemorebemore.ca/>)

-30-

Contact

Lisa Pike

Executive Director

NLAO

709-765-1096 | nlao@bellaliant.net

Simon Robert

Executive Director

Essilor Vision Foundation Canada

Tel 514-347-8136 | srobert@essilor.ca