

## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **August is Declared Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month by Prevent Blindness and the National Optometric Association**

#### ***-National Non-profit Groups Join Together to Educate Public on the Importance of Healthy Vision for Kids-***

**CHICAGO (July 22, 2019)** – Across the country, many children are beginning a new school year and healthy vision will be critical to a successful academic year. As a child grows, an untreated eye disease or condition becomes more difficult to correct. These can worsen and lead to other serious problems as well as affect reading ability, focus, behavior, personality and social adjustment in school. Vision problems that can affect children include Amblyopia, (“lazy eye”), Strabismus, (“crossed eyes”), and the most common forms of refractive error: myopia (nearsightedness) and hyperopia (farsightedness).

For the second year in a row, [Prevent Blindness](#) and the [National Optometric Association \(NOA\)](#) are teaming up to declare August as Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month to educate parents and caregivers on the steps that should be taken to ensure that students are provided with the best opportunity to have a successful school year through healthy vision.

To help educate parents and in celebration of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the [National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness](#) is offering the newly revised “[Guide to Vision Health for Your Newborn, Infant, and Toddler](#).” This no-cost comprehensive resource offers information on a variety of topics, including common milestones for visual development, how to help your baby’s vision to develop, warning signs of possible vision problems, and more. The earlier a vision disorder can be identified and treated, the stronger start to learning and development a child will have.

A child may be at higher risk of developing a vision problem if he or she:

- Was born prematurely (less than 32 weeks completed gestation.)
- Has a family history of vision disorders, such as childhood cataract, amblyopia (may also be called lazy eye), misaligned eyes, eye tumors, or wore glasses before first grade.
- Has had an eye injury (problems resulting from childhood eye injuries may develop much later in life.)
- Has been diagnosed with a problem that could affect his or her physical, mental and/or, emotional development.

“By diagnosing and treating vision problems early, we can actually help prevent vision loss later in life,” said Dr. Sherrol A. Reynolds, president of the NOA, associate professor at Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry, and volunteer member of the Prevent Blindness Scientific Advisory Committee. “Vision is so instrumental in how a child develops, that by ensuring all of our children have access to quality eye care services, we are helping build a brighter future.

Prevent Blindness partner, [OCuSOFT® Inc.](#), a privately-held eye and skin care company dedicated to innovation in eyelid hygiene and ocular health, will make a donation to Prevent Blindness in support of Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month.

To download a copy of the *Guide to Vision Health for Your Newborn, Infant, and Toddler* or for more information on [children’s eye health and safety](#), the NCCVEH, or financial assistance programs, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit [preventblindness.org](#).

### **About Prevent Blindness**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation’s leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at [preventblindness.org](#) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](#).

### **About the National Optometric Association**

The National Optometric Association (NOA) was founded in 1969 in Richmond, Virginia, as a not-for-profit corporation. The NOA is comprised primarily of minority optometrists from throughout the United States. The recruitment of minority students into the schools and colleges of optometry and their placement into appropriate practice settings upon graduation are two priorities of the NOA. Coincident with these priorities is the underlying purpose of the NOA — advancing the visual health of minority populations through the delivery of effective and efficient eye and vision care services to the minority community, a shared priority with Prevent Blindness. The NOA is committed to reducing visual impairment and blindness by increasing awareness, education, community outreach and screenings in urban areas, and partnership with the Prevent Blindness network of affiliates. More information about the NOA is available online at:

<http://www.nationaloptometricassociation.com/>

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