*Note: This article was written for a newsletter targeted to families of young children diagnosed as D/HH*

HEALTHY VISION AND EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF CONCERNS

Have you heard of a person being described as a “visual learner”? Vision can be an important mode for learning for many people, but especially for children and youth who are Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing.  This article provides some important information about maintaining vision.

According to the Illinois Optometric Association, a new state law requires comprehensive eye exams for children entering kindergarten or enrolling for the first time in public, private, or parochial elementary schools. Doctors of Optometry agree that the law is a crucial step to ensure that Illinois students perform at the best of their ability.

 Only licensed Optometrists or Ophthalmologists are qualified to conduct these eye exams according to the law. Proof of the required eye exam must be submitted by October 15 of each school year. Additional vision examinations at various grade levels may be required when deemed necessary by school personnel.

Healthy vision means that the eyes are effectively working together to enhance learning and mobility. According to statistics from the National Parent Teacher Association, about 86 percent of children entering first grade don’t receive an eye exam and ten million children function with vision loss.

The following are some observations which signal vision concerns; 1) Eyes are crossed or turning in or out 2) Eyes are frequently red, watery, or crusted 3) Eye lids droop to cover pupils 4) Eyes shake or move constantly 5) Unusual shape of pupils 6) White or cloudy pupils 7) Pupils are red or violet in color 8) Tilting or turning head to use one eye 9) Objects held unusually close or far when looking at them 10) Frequently running into things 11) Stands unusually close to the television 12) Pain is experienced in bright-light situations.

For more information and local resources, please visit [**http://www.ioaweb.org**](http://www.ioaweb.org/). To find a nearby optometrist, or to schedule an eye examination for your child, please visit [**http://www.aoa.org**](http://www.aoa.org/).

If you have questions about vision loss, contact Project Reach: Illinois Deaf-Blind Services at 630-790-2474 or email mclyne@philiprockcenter.org

Carla Beck

Project Reach: Illinois Deaf-Blind Services