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**The National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at  
Prevent Blindness Issues New Report to Improve Children’s Vision  
Health**

***-“Children’s Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues”  
Report Includes Detailed Statistics, Information and Strategies to Improve  
Children’s Vision in the United States-***

**CHICAGO (April 4, 2016)** – To help address the need for effective programs and strategies for children’s vision, [The National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness](http://www.PreventBlindness.org) (NCCVEH) has released a comprehensive new report titled “*Children’s Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues.*” The report may be viewed on the newly designed website from Prevent Blindness, or downloaded in PDF form, at [www.PreventBlindness.org](http://www.PreventBlindness.org).

Vision impairments are common conditions among young children. If not detected and treated early, they could affect all aspects of life, negatively impacting a child’s ability to learn, athletic performance, and self-esteem.

Data from the report includes:

- The economic costs of children’s vision disorders are significant, amounting to \$10 billion yearly in the United States.
- More than one in five preschool-age children enrolled in Head Start have a vision disorder.
- Visual functioning is a strong predictor of academic performance in school-age children.
- Amblyopia (sometimes called “lazy eye”), is the most common cause of vision loss in children.
- Uncorrected refractive errors (including significant near-sightedness, far-sightedness, and astigmatism) in infants and preschool-age children are associated with developmental delay, as well as with clinically identified deficits in cognitive and visual-motor functions that may, in turn, have a negative impact on school readiness.
- Among children with diagnosed eye conditions, African American children have lower overall health care expenditures than Caucasian children, but twice the

expenditures for eye/vision-related emergency services, possibly indicating less access to a regular source of office-based health care.

- More than a third of Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic black adolescents have inadequately corrected refractive error.

The *Children's Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues* report begins with an outline of the current landscape for children's health issues including national prevalence rates for vision conditions (amblyopia, strabismus, astigmatism, myopia, hyperopia, etc.), including breakdowns by age and ethnic groups.

Also in the report are details on the impact of access to care issues, a summary of school vision screening rates and requirements by state, examples of effective state program approaches, and a state-by-state breakdown of regulations related to school-age and preschool-age vision screening.

The goal of the report is to provide information and examples that may translate into effective community-level health promotion strategies that lead to improved vision systems for children.

In 2009, Prevent Blindness was awarded a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish the NCCVEH. The mission of the NCCVEH is to develop a coordinated public health infrastructure to promote and ensure a comprehensive, multi-tiered continuum of vision care for young children. In addition, the NCCVEH has established a national expert advisory committee from the fields of ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics, research, and public health along with family representation. The panel assisted in the completion of the report.

"When we established the NCCVEH, we set out to identify and address the vision health needs of our children, as well as put together effective strategies and programs," said Hugh Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "Our new report was created to provide an easy-to-use, evidence-based guide that helps us demonstrate the need for essential vision care for our kids and sound approaches to achieve a lifetime of healthy vision."

For more information about the *Children's Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues* report or children's vision health topics, please visit <http://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/>, or contact Kira Baldonado at (800) 331-2020 or [kbaldonado@preventblindness.org](mailto:kbaldonado@preventblindness.org).

### **About Prevent Blindness and its National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health**

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. In 2009, Prevent Blindness established the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health, with funding and leadership support from the HRSA- Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Serving as a major resource for the establishment of a public health infrastructure, the National Center advances and promotes children's vision and eye care, providing leadership and training to public entities throughout the United States. The National Center is advised by a committee of national experts and leaders from the fields of ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics, nursing, family advocates and public health to guide the work and recommendations of the Center. 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 [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org) or [www.facebook.com/preventblindness](https://www.facebook.com/preventblindness)

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