



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Photos Attached

Keeping Keiki's Eyes in Focus

(Honolulu, Hawaii), September 10, 2013 – It's that time again when keiki return to the classroom for the start of another school year, but there are more than new clothes and supplies to think about. Children's eyes play a crucial role in the learning process, and untreated vision problems can make reading and writing a struggle — even lead to permanent eye damage.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology designates September Children's Eye Health and Safety Month to remind parents to get their child's vision examined by a health care professional and to watch out for any signs of possible conditions.

The World Health Organization estimates that worldwide 19 million children under 15 years of age are visually impaired — 12 million of which are due to refractive errors that are easily diagnosed and treatable. Refractive errors include myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), astigmatism (blurred vision at all distances), amblyopia (lazy eye) and strabismus (misaligned eyes).

Myopia rates have soared over that last four decades by over 66 percent, according to a study by the National Center for Health Statistics and the National Eye Institute. Some experts believe one reason may be the increased use of technology with kids spending hours on end staring at computers, smartphones and tablets.

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“It’s important for parents, teachers and caregivers to monitor children and know what to watch out for in terms of possible vision problems,” shared Dr. Christopher Tortora, M.D., medical director of the Hawaiian Eye Center and Dry Eye Clinic. “Children don’t have a reference point other than their own. They may not realize a problem exists or choose to just ignore it.”

Signs to watch out for include:

- Difficulty with reading or writing
- Squinting
- Sensitivity to light
- Complaints of eye pain or discomfort
- Redness
- White, grayish-white or yellow color in the pupil
- Drooping or bulging eyelid(s)
- Eyes that are crossed or don’t focus together
- Pus or crust

Regular checkups and early detection and treatment of eye-related issues are key to protecting a child’s vision.

Dr. Christopher Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of “The Hawaiian Eye Show,” a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at the Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 or visit www.HawaiianEye.com and www.Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter, where “life has never looked better.”

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