

Child Safety Update



Eye Protection Crucial When Playing Sports

(NAPSA)—Sports require sharp vision and young athletes need to keep their eyes protected to prevent injury and keep them in the game. While thousands of children suffer sports-related eye injuries each year, there are steps that parents and coaches can take to prevent them.

The Problem

According to the National Eye Institute (NEI):

- Most eye injuries among kids ages 11 to 14 occur while playing sports.
- Every 13 minutes, an ER in the United States treats a sports-related eye injury.
- Eye injuries are the leading cause of blindness in children.

An Answer

That's why the American Optometric Association (AOA) stresses the importance of wearing well-fitted, protective eyewear when athletes are playing sports or participating in other activities.

As much as 90 percent of injuries can be avoided with appropriate eye and face protection such as safety glasses and goggles, safety shields and eye guards designed for sport. If your child wears prescription glasses or sunglasses, safety goggles should be worn over them.

The NEI notes that polycarbonate lenses provide the most suitable protection from sports injury. This type of material is lightweight, scratch resistant and can be designed to meet most eyewear designs or prescriptions. In addition, polycarbonate is 10 times more impact resistant than similar materials.

Protective eyewear not only defends your children's eyes from harm, it may enhance playing



Following a few simple safety precautions can help keep children safe during sports and games.

ability. The NEI says children can play better when they're less afraid of getting hit in the eyes or face while participating in sports.

Scheduling regular eye exams with an optometrist is important for all children—not only to ensure their vision isn't hindering their academic and day-to-day activities but to identify problems that could impede their performance in a particular sport.

Sports have different visual demands. In soccer, for instance, a player needs good peripheral vision to see a teammate or opponent in the corner of his or her eye, while in hockey, a player needs good dynamic visual acuity; that is, the ability to see objects moving very fast. An optometrist can discuss your child's needs with you and recommend the best eyeglasses, contact lenses or sports vision training program for particular sports and daily regimens.

Learn More

For further information about protecting and enhancing your child's vision and how to find an optometrist nearby, visit www.aoa.org.