



# Kids Welcome Here

**Kids Welcome Here**<sup>®</sup> is a multi-pronged education campaign designed by the Pennsylvania Optometric Association (POA) to increase the number of children who receive eye examinations from optometrists. The campaign is based on the premise that educated parents will take their children for early, regular comprehensive eye examinations. Further, optometrists are the key to providing the necessary education to parents and others who provide care to children.

**Kids Welcome Here** consists of five major elements: 1) materials for optometrists to use to educate their patients who have children about the importance of early, regular eye examinations; 2) materials educating school nurses about the importance of regular eye exams for school-aged children; 3) continuing education in pediatric vision care for optometrists; 4) consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Health to revise the commonwealth's school vision screening program; and 5) education for school nurses regarding the revised school vision screening program as well as general eye health issues.

## **Kids Welcome Here Campaign Details**

### **1) Education Materials Distributed to Optometrists and Others Who Provide Care to Young Children**

#### **Target Audience: Parents**

Printed **Kids Welcome Here** education materials (posters, flyers and brochures) are designed for optometrists to use in their offices to educate parents about the need for pediatric eye examinations according to the Clinical Care Guidelines of the American Optometric Association. These materials are provided free to POA members. Materials using the **Children's Vision 1-3-5**<sup>®</sup> slogan, which are a variation of the **Kids Welcome Here** materials that are appropriate for non-optometric settings, are provided to Department of Health clinics and day care centers to educate parents that infants and children need routine comprehensive eye care.

### **2) Education Materials Distributed to School Nurses and Teachers**

#### **Target Audience: School Nurses, Teachers and Parents**

When Kids Welcome Here first launched, printed **Vision is Elementary**<sup>®</sup> education materials (posters) were mailed to all 4,000 public and private elementary schools in Pennsylvania to be a constant reminder of the importance of vision care for school-aged children. Because a school nurse or teacher may be the first adult alerted to a child's vision problem, it is important that they are aware and reminded that children need to have regular comprehensive eye examinations.

### **3) Pediatric Vision Care Continuing Education**

#### **Target Audience: Optometrists**

In March of 2001, the POA developed a specialized six credit hour continuing education program that was offered in two locations in Pennsylvania. The program provided both clinical and practice management information to increase a doctor's clinical knowledge and comfort level in seeing pediatric patients. The POA continues providing pediatric vision care speakers at its educational events. As recent as November of 2014, the POA has continued to execute pediatric continuing education programs for optometrists.

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### 4) **Revision of the Pennsylvania Department of Health's School Vision Screening Program**

**Target Audience: Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners,  
Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of School Health**

Because each child in Pennsylvania is mandated to attend school, each child receives a vision screening from a school nurse. Through relationships with nurses established by members of the POA's Pediatric Vision Care Committee, the POA was asked to participate in the revision of the Pennsylvania Department of Health's school vision screening program. The Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners were extremely appreciative of the time and effort devoted by the POA to the project and the process has created tremendous good will. After a two-year effort, the program, implemented in September 2002, includes many of the POA's recommendations to improve the quality of school vision screenings. While the POA remains consistent in its position that school vision screenings are not adequate pediatric vision care, the POA recognizes school screenings are often the only vision care many children receive and it is in the best interests of Pennsylvania's children to make them as efficacious as possible.

### 5) **Two School Nurse Education Programs**

**Target Audience: Pennsylvania's School Nurses**

#### **A) School Vision Screening Education Program**

In conjunction with the revision of the school vision screening program, the POA designed an education presentation detailing the rationale for the new tests as well as how to administer them for individual optometrists to present to their local nurses. The cover letter written by the Pennsylvania Department of Health that accompanied the revised school vision screening program acknowledged the POA as its partner in providing training and technical assistance and referred nurses to the POA office to set up free educational programs. As of 2007, it was estimated that all school nurses in the state had the opportunity to attend this presentation, delivered by their POA members at no charge, through their school district, intermediate unit or Pennsylvania Department of Health Region. In addition to the individual school vision screening program presentations, the POA is taking every opportunity to build relationships with our school nurses. In March 2002, the POA provided the Keynote speaker at the Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners' annual meeting. The POA has also designed a portable booth for exhibit halls to be displayed at nurse association meetings to serve as a resource for pediatric vision care.

#### **B) Children's Vision: A Guide for School Nurses & Teachers**

The POA developed a second education program to educate school nurses, teachers, parents and others who provide care to kids about general children's vision issues. The program touches on basic anatomy of the eye as a basis for detailed discussions on myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism, amblyopia, strabismus, convergence insufficiency, binocular vision disorders, color vision deficiency and conjunctivitis. The program also links vision to learning and highlights the importance of regular comprehensive eye care in addition to school vision screenings.

#### **C) Contact Lens Education Program**

The POA developed a third education program to educate school nurses, teachers, parents and others who provide care to kids about proper contact lens usage and hygiene. The program touches on the basic anatomy of the eye, hyperopia, astigmatism, the history and evolution of contact lenses, the different types of contact lenses in use today, and much more. The program also demonstrates how to insert and remove different contact lenses with photographs and directions.

### **Kids Welcome Here Honored with Award**

**Kids Welcome Here** received a *Keystone Award* from the Public Relations Society of America, Central Pennsylvania Chapter, a first place honor recognizing it as an outstanding external communications program. In addition, the POA received an AOA-Luxottica Healthy Eyes Healthy People grant to expand the **Kids Welcome Here** campaign in Pennsylvania during its earlier years.

### **Kids Welcome Here Licenses**

In order to serve the interests of children, the POA is licensing the **Kids Welcome Here** materials to other state optometric associations building their pediatric vision care initiative. Eleven states in addition to Pennsylvania have licensed **Kids Welcome Here** materials for use in their states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Utah and West Virginia. For information on licensing the program in your state, contact POA Communications Coordinator Kelsey Rodkey at [Kelsey@poaeyes.org](mailto:Kelsey@poaeyes.org) or (717) 233-6455. For additional information about the program in general, contact Kelsey.



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## POA Member Survey Results

In late 2002, we conducted a practice characteristics survey of our 901 active members. A portion of the survey addressed the POA's pediatric vision care initiative.

We enjoyed nearly a 49% response rate, with 441 out of 901 members returning their completed surveys. The following data is from the results of that survey:

**Nearly two years after the POA's Kids Welcome Here® materials were mailed to members:**

35.7% are using Kids Welcome Here posters in their offices

35.7% are using Kids Welcome Here brochures in their offices

21.4% are recommending children have their first exam by the age of 1

64.5% are recommending children have their first exam by the age of 5

21.5% have already presented the school vision screening education program to their local nurses

An additional 15.5% plan to present the school vision screening education program to their local nurses

At the time of the survey, we estimated that over 150 education sessions on either school vision screening procedures or general children's vision have been presented by POA members to school districts and local/regional school nurse groups. By the end of 2007, we estimated that nearly all school nurses have had the opportunity to attend the education program at least once.

Since the survey has been completed, we have increased our communications to our members about the ongoing availability of materials at no charge to them as well as the opportunity to work with their local school nurses. We regularly put this information in our newsletter. The POA also created a list of member doctors who are willing to volunteer their time to deliver the pediatric education presentations.

In order to have a successful campaign, you not only need to provide the materials to your members, but also you need to remind them to use them, remind them additional copies are available and remind them why pediatric vision care is important to the children they serve.



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## Licensing Information

State optometric associations that are interested in using the POA's **Kids Welcome Here**<sup>®</sup> (KWH) materials in their state can license the program from the POA. There is a \$1,000 license fee, which allows a state association to purchase the following printed KWH materials from the POA:

The license provides for:

**Kids Welcome Here**<sup>®</sup>/**Children's Vision 1-3-5**<sup>®</sup> Poster (20" x 30")

**Kids Welcome Here**<sup>®</sup>/**Children's Vision 1-3-5**<sup>®</sup> Brochure (20" x 30")

Frequency of Exams Flyer (based on AOA's guidelines) (8-1/2" x 11")

**Vision is Elementary**<sup>®</sup> Poster (20" x 30")

**Vision is Elementary**<sup>®</sup> Brochure (20" x 30")

Materials are personalized for each state, including the name, logo, address, etc. of the state association as well as the name and logo of a sponsor (if appropriate). Because the cost of the printed materials varies depending on quantity, the POA will obtain individual quotes for materials from its printer upon request. Please allow two weeks for the POA to obtain the quote.

Kelsey Rodkey, POA communications coordinator, will work with the designated representative of the state association to personalize the materials. This process is usually done via email using PDF files. Upon final approval from the state association, the process to print and prepare materials for mailing will take approximately four weeks. Printed materials can be mailed in bulk directly to the state association; however, some states that have licensed the program have chosen to provide the POA with a membership mailing list so that the POA's printer can prepare the materials for mailing to individual members and deliver them to the post office.

Materials must be purchased from the POA; signing a license agreement does not grant a state association permission to use the POA's registered logos or slogans to print their own education materials. However, the license agreement does allow a state association to use the KWH logo and the "**Kids Welcome Here**," "**Children's Vision 1-3-5**," and "**Vision is Elementary**" slogans within their state to promote participation in the campaign (i.e., newsletter, advertising, website). The logo and slogans cannot be used to create or print new or additional marketing or educational materials (i.e., brochures, flyers or posters). The logo and slogans cannot be altered.

The POA continues to expand its **Kids Welcome Here** campaign, and reserves the right to require payment of additional licensing fees for the right to use the graphics and slogans in new or modified materials.