



To: Advocates for Children's Vision Care: Organizing a Symposium on Children's Vision Needs

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This letter is written to bring to your attention the high price we pay as a society for failure to provide better vision care for our children and youth. I was among many who learned this year of a very serious neglect of a common vision problem: Convergence Insufficiency. Many of us were shocked to learn that the diagnosis of "convergence insufficiency" has been known to optometrists since the 1950's but the public has not known of the seriousness of this condition and related binocular vision dysfunctions, and the high cost we pay for failure to diagnose and treat these common problems. Far too many students are struggling with sustained focusing, tracking, 3D perception and other symptoms of eyes that do not work as well together as is needed for success in school and in many professions.

I strongly support a large state-wide symposium on vision and learning to be held in Seattle to discuss the range of issues related to poor vision care. We have a number of specialists in our own state including, but not limited to, Dr. Cory Manley of Pasco Vision Clinic who as a pediatric/ developmental optometrist has work with hundreds of children over the past 23 years helping them overcome reading, learning, self-esteem and related family harmony problems. I know that Dr. Nancy Torgerson of Lynwood is also a nationally-known expert on detection and treatment of children's vision dysfunctions.

Although this problem is just starting to get public visibility, I have been impressed to learn of several vision experts whose writing and work are great resources. The Call to Action authored by Dr. Joel Zaba in 2008, documenting the high costs of ignoring vision dysfunction issues, is true for most states, including ours. Professor of Pediatric/Binocular Vision Dominick M. Maino of the Illinois College of Optometry co authored a resource text providing critically important information on high risk children's vision needs, *Visual Diagnosis and Care of the Patient with Special Needs*. Psychologist and Developmental Optometrist Maureen Powers formed the Gemstone Foundation in 2003 in California and is doing exciting and critically important work on vision and learning. We need to hear from these experts, as well as researchers from Pacific University (Oregon) College of Optometry who for decades have worked to highlight and address vision needs, especially of disadvantaged children.

A state-wide conference could bring together several professions to share their information with those in the pediatric and developmental optometry field and create an extensive and open exchange on what the vision needs of our children are and how we can address those needs. Thanks for your support!

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