

Eye exams available for young students

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Vision problems may adversely affect nearly one in four children starting kindergarten this year in Alberta, says an official with the Alberta Association of Optometrists.

Brian Wik, association executive director, said his group is tracking the problem by offering exams and eyeglasses to kindergarten students.

The Eye See . . . Eye Learn program promotes vision wellness, Wik said.

The association encourages parents to get their children tested for possible vision problems.

Last year, some 1,600 kindergarten children received free eyeglasses from Alberta optometrists, including 60 per cent for the first time.

Research indicates that 80 per cent of all learning is visual and that 60 per cent of children experiencing difficulties likely have uncorrected or undetected vision problems, Wik said.

Of the 51,000 kindergarten-aged children in Alberta, only 33 per cent had an eye exam in 2010.

Of these, 16 per cent couldn't see items at a distance such as a white board and 84 per cent couldn't see items close to them like books.

For more information, contact www.optometrists.ab.ca or call toll free 1-800-272-8843 extension 232.