

Senator Farley reported that August has been designated since 1995 as the month to focus on children's eye health and safety. This national observance educates parents and educators about the critical link between vision and learning.

Children are more susceptible to UV damage than adults because they tend to spend more time outside than adults. To protect children's eyes, adults should:

- * Buy sunglasses that offer UV protection.
- * Make sure sunglasses fit the child's face, shielding eyes from all angles.
- * Choose lenses that are impact resistant and made of polycarbonate, not glass.
- * Insist children wear a brimmed hat and sunglasses.

The College of Optometrists in Vision Development reports that 25 percent of students in grades kindergarten through 6th have visual problems that impede learning. An estimated 80 percent of children with a learning disability have an undiagnosed vision problem. A three year study of 540 children found that those with visual perceptual and eye movement difficulties did poorly on standardized tests.

Senator Farley suggests parents work with their pediatricians on finding vision screenings for children before they begin the school year. Or visit the College of Optometrists in Vision Development's website for more information on this topic at www.covd.org and to locate a developmental optometrist in the area.