



# WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

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## **World Council of Optometry Prioritizes Child Eye Health for World Sight Day 2024**

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**ST. LOUIS, OCTOBER 10, 2024**—World Sight Day, 10 October 2024, highlights the importance of prioritizing child eye health and giving children everywhere the opportunity to love their eyes. Today, the World Council of Optometry (WCO) joins our partners at the [International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness \(IAPB\)](#) and thousands worldwide for World Sight Day 2024.

“World Sight Day 2024 is focused on children's vision. What a great opportunity to highlight and increase awareness of the importance of screening, diagnosing, and treating vision issues early in a child's life to reduce the number of people with preventable visual impairments,” said Dr. Sandra Block, WCO President, “Good vision is important for our children to learn and grow.”

This year, World Sight Day is a call to action. We are asking parents, caregivers, and schools to prioritize child eye health by [making a pledge](#) to Love Your Child's Eyes, reinforcing your child's eye health as a top priority and raising awareness of the 450 million children globally who have a sight condition that needs treatment.

WCO Managing Director Alyssa Callaghan is making the pledge to love her daughter's eyes. “As an employee of WCO and someone who received early intervention from an optometrist at the age of two, I understand the importance of having my child's eyes tested,” she shared, “Keeping her eyes healthy will set her up for success in her development and her future.”

WCO is pleased to highlight our [Pediatric Eye Care Resource](#), available to the public, which includes clinical information, assessment tools and references for clinicians to use to help children and their families in accessing the best eye care possible.

Additionally, a new optometry publication summarizing a 2023 global survey conducted by the World Council of Optometry (WCO) was recently [published online](#). This study investigated the optometric demographics within WCO member countries and information related to the scope of practice and legislation. It showed that 20% of the countries surveyed limit the use of diagnostic drugs, which can impact early detection efforts of refractive errors in children.

"Many refractive errors in children, such as hyperopia, remain undetected unless diagnostic agents, such as cycloplegics, are used. Optometrists are well-positioned to address many eye conditions in children, however, several countries limit the use of diagnostic drugs as per the latest WCO Global Survey on scope of practice," said Dr. Yazan Gammoh, Chair of the WCO Education Committee and lead author of the study. "Limiting the use of diagnostic drugs by optometrists hinders the efforts for early detection and timely management of refractive errors in children which may lead to amblyopia (lazy eye), poor performance in school, and may affect their future career choices."

As primary eye care providers, optometrists must be active participants in efforts to address preventable vision impairment worldwide. WCO celebrates the efforts of our members across the globe to emphasize the importance of prioritizing eye care in young people. Visit [www.iapb.world/world-sight-day](http://www.iapb.world/world-sight-day) to learn how you can #LoveYourEyes for World Sight Day and encourage others to do the same.

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### **About the World Council of Optometry**

The World Council of Optometry (WCO) is an international membership-based non-profit organization for individual optometrists, industry professionals and optometric organizations that envisions a world where optometry makes high quality eye health and vision care accessible to all people. Its mission is to facilitate the development of optometry around the world and support optometrists in promoting eye health and vision care as a human right through advocacy, education, policy development and humanitarian outreach. To learn more, please visit [www.worldcouncilofoptometry.info](http://www.worldcouncilofoptometry.info) or follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram.

### **About the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness**

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) is the overarching alliance for the global eye health sector, with more than 250 organizations in over 100 countries, working together for a world where everyone has universal access to eye care. Learn more at <https://www.iapb.world/>.



Dr. Sandra S. Block, WCO President



Dr. Yazan Gammoh, WCO Education Committee Chairman



Dr. Sandra Block, pictured holding a World Sight Day 2024 campaign sign at an eye screening event held on October 8<sup>th</sup> in New York City.

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