

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Early Childhood Vision Care Education Program
2 and for powers and duties of the Department of Health.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Early
7 Childhood Vision Care Education Act.

8 Section 2. Findings.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

10 (1) The National Institute of Health reports that many
11 vision problems develop before children reach school age.

12 (2) According to the Centers for Disease Control, less
13 than 15% of all preschool children receive an eye examination
14 and less than 22% of preschool children receive some type of
15 vision screening.

16 (3) Every effort must be made to ensure that, before
17 they reach five years of age, children receive a screening

1 exam from their health care provider.

2 (4) Early recognition of vision disorders and eye
3 disease results in more effective treatment that can be sight
4 saving or even lifesaving.

5 (5) The most common disabling childhood vision disorders
6 include amblyopia, strabismus and significant refractive
7 errors.

8 (6) Retinoblastoma, which can be detected in a routine
9 eye examination, is the most common type of eye tumor in
10 children and is the seventh most common pediatric cancer.

11 (7) Children born with retinoblastoma are rarely
12 diagnosed at birth, with the average age of diagnosis at two
13 years of age.

14 (8) Ninety-five percent of all cases of retinoblastoma
15 occur in children under five years of age.

16 (9) Untreated, retinoblastoma is almost always fatal,
17 however, early diagnosis and treatment save lives and
18 preserve visual function.

19 Section 3. Definitions.

20 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
21 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
22 context clearly indicates otherwise:

23 "Amblyopia." The loss of one eye's ability to see details.

24 "Department." The Department of Health of the Commonwealth.

25 "Retinoblastoma." A cancer of one or both eyes which occurs
26 in young children.

27 "Strabismus." A disorder in which the two eyes do not line
28 up in the same direction and therefore do not look at the same
29 object at the same time.

30 Section 4. Early Childhood Vision Care Education Program.

1 (a) Establishment.--The department shall establish the Early
2 Childhood Vision Care Education Program to promote public
3 awareness of the need for vision care for young children and the
4 value of early detection, diagnosis and treatment of vision
5 disorders and eye diseases.

6 (b) Duties of department.--The department shall:

7 (1) Establish a public education and outreach campaign
8 through written materials and brochures to promote the
9 importance of vision examination for young children and
10 awareness of vision disorders and eye diseases, including
11 amblyopia, strabismus and retinoblastoma.

12 (2) Develop educational materials and brochures and make
13 them available to parents through State and local departments
14 of health, hospitals, clinics, health care providers,
15 preschool programs, child-care providers and early childhood
16 programs.

17 (3) Develop relationships with health care providers and
18 health-related community-based organizations to promote and
19 coordinate public education programs on early childhood
20 vision care.

21 Section 5. Evaluation.

22 (a) Evaluation.--The department shall evaluate the Early
23 Childhood Vision Care Education Program every two years. The
24 findings shall be transmitted to the General Assembly
25 electronically and be made available on the department's
26 publicly accessible Internet website.

27 (b) Required information.--The department's evaluation shall
28 include:

29 (1) A description of the material developed.

30 (2) How, when and where the materials are disseminated.

1 (3) A description of the relationships that were
2 developed among the department, health care providers and
3 health-related community-based organizations.

4 (4) Any other result of the program.

5 Section 6. Grant acceptance.

6 The department may accept grants, services and property from
7 the Federal Government, foundations, organizations and other
8 entities as may be available to carry out the provisions of this
9 act.

10 Section 7. Effective date.

11 This act shall take effect in 60 days.