



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FREE EYE EXAMINATIONS FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED SCHOOL CHILDREN
OFFERED BY FLORIDA HEIKEN CHILDREN'S VISION PROGRAM

As parents prepare to send their children back to school, eye examinations by licensed optometrists are important to ensuring scholastic success. Underprivileged Florida families can ensure their children's eye health by contacting the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, a subsidiary of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, for comprehensive eye examinations with prescription glasses when needed at no cost to the family.

To apply for an eye examination through the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, visit the Heiken Portal at www.FloridaHeiken.org or call 305-856-9830 with questions.

The American Optometric Association reports that that 1 in every 4 children has vision problems which may contribute to poor school performance, behavior issues and delinquency. Their research shows that literacy can be improved with early intervention. With corrective lenses, children are able to read their assignments, see the board, and learn to their fullest potential. Their prospects for succeeding in school improve immeasurably.

The mission of the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program is to make sure that all financially disadvantaged schoolchildren who fail their vision screening have access to comprehensive eye examinations, including dilation and glasses, if required, to give them the best chance at academic success. These no cost services are offered statewide, either on-site at schools via five mobile eye clinics or by Heiken's network of more than 1,100 participating optometrists statewide.

Five percent of low-income schoolchildren receiving a comprehensive eye exam are referred for medical intervention for retinal tears, glaucoma and other eye abnormalities that left undetected could lead to permanent vision loss. Approximately 73 percent of all children examined through the Heiken program required and received prescription eyeglasses, confirming the importance of a follow-up eye exam after a student fails the state-mandated vision screening.

Funded by the Health Foundation of South Florida, a market research survey was conducted by Eliza Corp of 1,500 families whose child had received prescription eyeglasses during the 2019-2020 school year from our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program. Seventy seven percent of respondents reported that their child had improved in school because of the services provided by our Heiken Program.

The Heiken program undertakes its critically important work with funding from the Florida Department of Health, and additional funding from The Children's Trust, The Miami Foundation, Lions Clubs International Foundation, The Batchelor Foundation, Baptist Health Foundation, AD Henderson Foundation, Quantum Foundation, other private foundations and individual donors.