



# THE TOHONO O'ODHAM VISION SCREENING PROGRAM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA



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Dear Colleagues:

For many years, the Indian Health Service has provided eye care for children with astigmatism. It remains a challenge to identify the child in need of eyeglasses, and to provide eyeglasses for children while they are young enough to be responsive to the benefits of optical correction and the prevention of treatment of refractive amblyopia.

The Tohono O'Odham Nation has developed a comprehensive preschool vision screening and spectacle prescribing program for the benefit of our Tribal children in the 3- to 5-year age group. Working with the National Eye Institute and the University of Arizona Department of Ophthalmology, we have developed a method to prescreen children for the corneal astigmatism that is so common in so many tribes, efficiently examine the children and prescribe glasses, and then to verify that the glasses allow them to see appropriately.

Please allow us to share with you the program that we have developed, in the hopes that it might be of benefit to those you serve as well. In the enclosed packet, please find:

- A manual of procedures that describes how we prescreen the children for corneal astigmatism using an automated hand-held keratometer.
- Prescribing recommendations for preschool children with refractive errors, and a description of the protocol that we use in examining children who are found on screening to require a complete eye examination. In our system, one group works to screen the children and identify a group of 20-30 children who warrant eye exams. These children are then assembled at the school on a day when an eye doctor can spend 2-3 hours refracting those children, with a high probability that most will need glasses.
- Three publications by the team of investigators at the University of Arizona that goes into the details of the study that led to the development of our program. The authors would be pleased to discuss their conclusions and assist you in applying this program at your request.

We are pleased to be able to share our program with you in the hopes that it may help other Native American children. Please contact us if we may help you get started.

Sincerely,

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