

VISION SCREENING FOR ORPHANAGE CHILDREN



Whether it's checking for refractive errors or raising awareness about eye care, the Elite School of Optometry has always considered children as its high priority group. In the year 2010 alone, the ESO conducted vision screening for 47,999 people of whom 33482 were children.

Eye ailments in children

Refractive errors and Squint, detected and treated at an early age prevents lazy eye which is a more complex eye ailment afflicting children. Children studying in schools, private or Government, have the opportunity of undergoing eye check up once during every year during annual health examinations. Parents are informed of their eye ailments and treatment in the form of spectacles or other means is given to these children.

Children in orphanages

Children in most orphanages do not get adequate attention in terms of health care. Given the financial crunch that most of them face it becomes difficult to manage even their day to day running; this pushes health concerns of the children to the back of the mind. Unfortunately these children are also not covered by any eye health care programme.

Systematic protocol

Basic Vision screening to assess refractive errors, refraction to ascertain power and type of glasses, computerized Binocular vision assessment to check both eye functioning and eye health are the four areas of health care to be assessed in these children. Every Sunday a team comprising of optometrists, optometry interns and a social worker visit a predetermined orphanage and perform detailed evaluation. Glasses are distributed in the subsequent week itself. After using the glasses for around two months, the child will be again examined by optometrists to check for compliance of spectacle wear. Those referred for other eye problems are examined in the base hospital and followed up by the social worker.

There are around 40 orphanages in and around Chennai, the ESO's child eye care project got off to a great start on June 12th 2011 in the Ramalinga Swamy Gurukulam, Kovilambakkam, with a screening of 27 children. Around 2000 children are expected to benefit from the project, when it culminates in August 2011. The ESO would continue to strive and channelize its energies and resources to provide the best eye care for the less fortunate children living in slums, children of bonded labor, other non school going children and tribal children who constitute its focus group..

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