BRIGHT EYES, **Get Outside**

**The message from the Association of Optometrists for this year’s 2015 Bright better children’s eye care in Ireland is that parents need to get their children outdoors every day to reduce the risk of vision problems.**

* Vision problems can lead to learning difficulties and under-performance in school and at sports.
* AOI research shows that international studies demonstrate that Myopia or Short-sightedness is on the increase globally.
* All studies conclude that there is a definite link between this rise in Myopia and the fact that children do not spend enough time outdoors.
* The studies also showed children who spent time outdoors were less likely to develop and those children who had myopia had a definite slow-down in its progression when more time was spent outdoors.
* If your child needs glasses, it is very important that they wear them. Not wearing glasses will in fact cause your child’s eyesight to deteriorate faster.
* As we get older, our eyes are at a higher risk of age-related sight threatening problems. This includes diseases such as Glaucoma and Cataracts and people with myopia re at a higher risk of developing complications from these diseases.

**The Association of Optometrists is encouraging parents to avail of the AOI 6 point vision check which is available at participating Opticians. See the list on the Bright Eyes Website.**

**Follow the AOI’s Top Tips for Healthy Eyes**

* Get your child’s eyes checked annually with the Bright Eyes 6 point vision check; a child who cannot see clearly cannot learn well
* Get your children outdoors; studies show that children who get daily time outdoors are less likely to develop problems with their eyesight
* Limit tablet and smart phone use; as well as keeping children indoors and causing children to spend too much time looking close up, tablet and smart phone can affect body and sleep rhythms which in turn have been linked to vision problems
* Encourage your child to do plenty of activities to improve hand-eye co-ordination. Good hand eye co-ordination improved writing, reading and learning skills.
* Encourage healthy eating habits; it will help protect your child’s eyes for life.