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eyes

a RIMS MEDIA

magazine for all optical retailers

Fashion: Children and Teen styles

Equipment: Tonometers

Dispensing: Dry Eye



WALTER & HERBERT

MADE IN ENGLAND

1946

Beautiful eyewear designed, manufactured and tested in England.

Exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Continental Eyewear. Models wear Turner in Flaming Ember and Churchill in Black Slate.

TEALTIME

This beautiful combination of blue and green takes its name from a bird, the common teal, which has a distinctive stripe of the colour on its head. Teal has proved a popular choice for this Spring/Summer's fashion collections, spotted on catwalks including Fendi, Valentino and John Richmond, among others.

The colour also works brilliantly for accessories too, as seen at Celine, with soft handbags in teal leather.

There's a slight element of nostalgia to teal that makes it an obvious choice for vintage influenced cats eyes. Acetate and plastic are ideal for delivering a depth and complexity of tone, with tints and marbled effects also making their mark. But metals too work well in teal, delivering a flat, matt look that chimes well with current surface trends in eyewear. The current crop of teal frames also mix up different materials and colours, with silver bridges complementing a teal front, for example, or a gold base to a semi-rimless frame.

The colour has also proved to be such a hit with eyewear designers not least because the colour is flattering to both fair and dark skin tones. Teal is feminine while not being as girly as pink, and while still being a strong style statement, is subtle enough not to attract unwanted attention. There is something rather timeless and elegant about teal, less conservative than navy blue, it never the less exudes a certain amount of gravitas. This is a colour that is hard working, classic and highly wearable, making it well worth considering moving forward into Autumn and Winter. ♦

Symphony of HDA® Colors collection, **Okia**



Model Anela from **SALT**



KLIJK Denmark, model K-611-512, WestGruppe, distributed in the UK by **Ridgway Optical**



Model Seashore Skyline 02, Coco Song collection, **Area98**



Walter & Herbert collection, model Aiken Pearlescent Emerald, **Continental Eyewear**



Model SPL618 579X, **Police**



Model 040 C3 Teal, Ascari Eyewear by **Dunelm**



Elevenparis, model EPPA0A88C6, **Caseco**

Young & Fun

As they grow up, children have very different needs when it comes to choosing the right eyewear. Here **eyes** provides a guide to help parents get it right, plus highlighting key aspects of frames that matter, whatever the age.

Catering for children presents a unique set of challenges for the optician. Providing a spectrum of products for all ages, ranging from babies to teens, can seem like an impossible task, but there are clear guidelines that should make decision making that little bit easier when it comes to buying for this market sector.

0-5 Years

When patients are this little, the challenge facing opticians is more about fit, comfort and keeping frames on tiny faces. "The best styles for young children are small frames, usually in a rounder shape with a dropped bridge as their noses have not yet fully developed, this allows the frame to sit in the correct position for vision and comfort," advises Tom Wollenden Director, Wolf Eyewear. Enrico Furlan, Creative Director, De Rigo, adds: "The styles that work best for 0-5s need to be comfortable, adaptable to a face that is changing and growing. Frames also need to be functional."

Along with comfort, young children are often drawn to brightly-coloured media or generic cartoon characters. Paul Gaba, Managing Director, Louis Stone, explains: "Colourful and playful 'cute' motifs and icons like footballs or animals work well, anything to make spectacles look like fun," he says. A spate of royal births has also had an impact on styling for this group. "This year we have seen a wave of nostalgia take over the children's fashion market inspired by the heightened profile of Prince George and Princess Charlotte. Retro designs, offered in bright and bold

shades, appeal to both parents seeking to emulate the timeless taste of the Royals as well as kids looking to showcase their sense of style," says Emily Andrews, Product Director, Eyespace.

6-12 Years

By the time kids get to six, they are far more active consumers. "Very young children are influenced primarily by their parents,

A more adult-like rectangle makes this frame aspirational for young consumers; this is model 005/n from **Safilo**

Blue is a favourite colour for boys; this is Lazer, model 2154 in Blue, from **Continental Eyewear**

Elevenparis, model ELAM007C66 features a bright two tone colour way in matt acetate, from **Casacco**

Emulating adult styling this Lazer Junior model 2168 is on colour trend with aqua, from **Continental Eyewear**



Colour is the main inspiration for the new Superflex Kids collection, from **WestGroupe**, distributed in the UK by Ridgway Optical. This is model SFK-189-2



Eye catching pops of red and blue, two perennial colour favourites from Lacoste, model L3627 at **Marchon**



With styling that directly references adult trends, this model ET17566-531 is by Esprit at **Charmant**



Blues continue to be very popular for young boys. **Louis Stone's** model hi 4 (flex, c2 - Dragon Blue) comes in 49x16-120, and is also available in candy floss and sharp black grey



A subtle overall tone with a surprise addition of orange makes this frame appealing for both parents and adults; pictured **Police** kids, model VPL577 AgF

bright colours and iconic characters that they recognise from their entertainment. As the child matures so does their taste and independence and after the age of eight, the trends tend to be that they want something sophisticated that makes them look older," explains Chris Beal, Vice President, Sales and Marketing Charmant UK. This age loses interest in cartoons and younger motifs, and is looking to teen and adult style, so expect a drop off in cute motifs. Harry Potter continues to hold an influential sway though, with smaller, round eyes and geek chic in general perennially popular.

Comfort though, particularly for the pre-teens, is still of paramount importance: "For the younger kids around six and seven, styles with nose pads are ideal for the developing bridge. Styles with a smaller A sizing 44-48 are ideal. Ideally a frame is selected for a child that can progress with their needs as they grow, both in terms of size and style," says Chelsea Wright, Designer at Ogi Eyewear. Durability is increasingly an issue too, as this is often the time when kids are most active and hard on their frames: "Styles have to be resistant to stress. For this reason, we prefer to use flexible and very resistant hinges and to avoid thin thicknesses," says Enrico Furlan, Creative Director of De Rigo.

13-16 Years

By the time children reach their teens, styles are increasingly adult (although scaled down for comfort). Individuality becomes important too: "Style is very personal, the younger kids tend to mimic their parents, while the older teens want to express their individual style," says Beverly Sulteanu, WestGroupe Vice President of Product Development. Nicky Clement, Marketing Manager, Eyespace, adds: "For older kids, moving into the teen bracket, their personal style preference may have evolved, and while parents may influence their choices, these young adults will undoubtedly have the final say. With the influence of social media and an awareness of celebrity style choices it is essential to present a range which not only offers quality but fashion forward frames that allow them to be expressive."

Fashion is a key driver: "As kids get older, they become more fashion conscious; so more variety of styles can be considered here with different shapes, colours becoming more of a factor as opposed to functionality. (There's an argument for) A style that is fashionable for every day use, with a secondary frame for sports," says a spokesperson for Marchon. According to Sulteanu, retro inspired shapes are huge for this market, and so are worth considering. Gabia of Louis Stone adds: "The market for teenagers is continuously changing and the size has got to be big, bright, bold and making a statement, although black is still very much in demand and probably will always be to



There has been a shift towards slimmer frames, which mirrors the current adult market, although a preference for acetate remains firm, as seen with this model Delta C1 from **Eyespace**



Even young kids like to look stylish; model CUB232 in colour 3 (red glitter) from **Wolf Eyewear**



Frames for the under fives need to be comfortable and fun. This is model BK022 C1 Red, from **Norville**

STYLES FOR THE VERY YOUNG

Children's eyewear supplier Dibble Optical has paediatric frame brands, Miraflex and the newly introduced Milo & Me.

The Flexible & Safe range from Miraflex are constructed using a special malleable plastic material using hinge-free technology and no metal parts, resulting in an ideal combination of comfort and safety. Frames are virtually indestructible. There are several new models in Dibble's new 2018 catalogue, including several additional frames with adapted nose bridges to compensate for a shallow nasal projection. Milo & Me frames are aimed at active children aged six upwards and are manufactured from TR90 and TPE material. They are available in several sizes and colour options and are equally suited for everyday wear and for sports and leisure activities.





Models Ajyana (girl) and Chesmu (boy) by Whiz Kids at Dunelm both feature strong and vibrant colours



Durability is very important, especially for active kids; this is model OK338 color 2248, Ogi Kids collection, Ogi Eyewear



Colorful but tough, these frames are made from flexible nylon. Tony frames from Scorpion Eyewear are comfortable and vibrant. Pictured are models TY3005C2; TY3023C3 and TY3029C3 (Left to right).



Inspired by Willy Wonka and Alice in Wonderland, sunglasses by Pepe Jeans Kids, models CLIFF P18044 (her) and FINLEY P18045 (him) are by Mondottica



Teenagers are often a lot more self conscious of their style choices and therefore colours are often a lot more muted and safe. This is model ES Vortex C2 and ES Invisible C1 from

International Eyewear

some extent for all older age groups." For the oldest in this group, it may even be worth steering them towards adult collections. "Adult frames in smaller sizes are a great addition for practices and offer a style that is not seen as babyish, a massive issue when youngsters are influenced by peer groups," suggests Chris Beal, Vice President, Sales and Marketing Charmant UK.

Durability

While there are marked differences in terms of style, some underlying qualities that make up a good frame for a child remain the same. First and foremost, and particularly for the rowdy 6-12s, frames need to be tough.

"Durability is a major factor in children's eyewear design because children can at times, be careless, enjoy some rough and tumble and are less likely to clean and care for their spectacles than adults," says Peter Beaumont, CEO, Dunelm. Oemert of Eyeglass agrees: "Safety and durability rank high on what interests parents; children require frames that can stand the test of time where active play is involved," she says.

Luckily most manufacturers conduct rigid testing and many brands feature innovative materials including memory metal and clever joints that withstand the strain even of consistent misuse by a seven-year old boy. There are even colourful safety bands to keep frames safe. "Children like to play, they have a busy life with sports and other activities, their glasses are on and off and not necessarily treated with the attention they might need, so quality is very important. You want the frames to last as long as possible," says Wolfenden of Wolf Eyewear. Olivia Young, Marketing Manager of International Eyewear adds: "It is important to consider durability as a key quality for the younger generation as they participate in more dynamic activities on a day to day basis which would make the frame more prone to damages."

Character Branding

The jury is quite divided about character branding, which very much depends on the age of the child. As a rule of thumb, younger children are more interested in this approach. And there's no doubt that certain brands, for example Marvel and Star Wars, do have the power to push purchases. "A child may recognise a brand and from that recognition instantly be drawn to that frame. For example Nike is one of the top five most recognised brands for millennials, with just the simplicity of the swoosh logo. When a child sees that on a frame, it may entice them to want to wear a Nike more than an unbranded frame," says a spokesperson for Marchon.

Young of International Eyewear advises a balanced approach: "Although licensed branding is important for familiarisation such as Disney products for the younger generation, in house children's brands have also become popular and desired. In house collections, share the same qualities, in terms of the quality and design, as licensed branded products and therefore make it competitive," she says.

And it's a good idea to remember that the market is fickle and fads can die very quickly. "A range of frames based on a film or a series of films can look dated after a while and easily end up as clearance frames. Children will not want to be out of fashion. Licensing or branding may appear to be a good idea based on what's in at the time, but give it a few months and something new is the 'next big thing,'" a bit of a damaging concept for companies purchasing large quantities of licensed stock," says Gaba of Louis Stone.

Colour Consciousness

Finally, while branding can be tricky, most manufacturers are agreed about the power of colour when it comes to children's ranges. It's fair to say that, in general, very young children love bright colours. "Colour is the key. For boys, we focus on vibrant, trendy colours such as red, blue and brown for a sporty, casual look emulating dad's fashion choices. For the girls, feminine colours; pink, fuchsia purple and teal. Two-tone and multi coloured as well as translucent shaded acetates are a key feature for both targets," says Sulteau of WestGroup. Chelsey Wright, Designer at Ogi Eyewear, agrees: "For girls purple is popular, as well as pink and teal, and for boys blue, navy, black, grey and green are the best selling colours."

As Peter Beaumont, CEO, Dunelm Optical points out though, it's important to offer discreet frames too. This is left over from residual anxiety about the potential of being teased for wearing eyewear in school. Anxious parents may counsel caution rather than indulge the child's natural colour preferences. "Strong and vibrant colours are still very much the look of the season and are naturally favoured by many children. However not all parents like bright colours and prefer something more understated for their child," he says.

Of course this changes as they mature. As children get older there is a close correlation between adult and teen styles. So much so, it can be hard to differentiate between the two. "The trend for Spring/Summer 2018 is clear; the most fashionable frames are black with dark lenses that completely shield the face. At the same time transparent colours are very trendy," says Furlan of De Rigo. For teens then, the answer is clear, just look at what works well for adults. ♦

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LEADING THE WAY

PART 6: Selling to children

Welcome to the sixth instalment of our dedicated business series for 2018. We aim to dive deep into diverse aspects of optical retail, helping to improve the day to day running of your business. Here we look at how opticians can attract and keep junior consumers (and their parents) happy.



Focusing on celebrity style and confident retro designs, Rock Star is an award-nominated children's collection from Eyespace. New release models, pictured left to right, James C2, Della C1 and Curtis C2.

There's an old retail adage that it's far easier to keep a customer than find a new one. With this in mind it makes sense to ensure customer loyalty as early as possible. Children well looked after could potentially turn out to be life-long customers. However, it's not simply a matter of sticking some small frames on a display unit; children have evolved into sophisticated consumers and will expect to be properly looked after. There are also huge disparities between the needs of a baby and a teenager. A closer examination of the service that you provide could well be in order if you wish to maximise the potential of this market.

Understanding Kids

First up it's important to understand what matters to children of all ages. "Opticians need to realise they have distinct and very different target audiences that they need to market to, if they wish to make a sale; the parent and the child. Each target will have different motivations and to understand what these are, before making the pitch, is essential," says Chris Beal, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Charmant UK. Beal points out that younger children will be motivated by media characters that they recognise and bright colours. Provided the fit and price is correct, parents will usually acquiesce to their demands. Older children meanwhile, will be looking for more mature styles. "To cater for this, practices could perhaps, have a look book of media personalities who wear eyewear and have a range of children's styles that are loosely based on these. Check children's TV as well as magazines and make up a scrapbook of images, this can help immensely in their decision making," suggests Beal. (Our frame fashion feature on page 16 will also help to guide you on what styles work best for which age group).

Digital Age

It's also important to understand that children now live a significant part of their lives online and are used to, and to a certain extent, expect that communication will

come through screens rather than being told something tricky to understand in a dry, complicated format. "This is your customer-base for the coming 20+ years, so it's beyond vital to catch their imagination now, both in the practice environment and in the digital arena, with savvy content that appeals to their senses; introduce eye-catching video displays to your window spaces, merchandise creatively, show that you follow the



Sophisticated and humorous, the Ted Baker Kids Campaign works well on teens, showing models River TBB965 and Alia TBB959, at Mondottica.

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Elevenparis Boys and Girls, model ELAA047C67, featuring graduated acetate, from Casceo.



Above: Low bridges are important for comfort and position in young children; this is model CUB CS10 from Wolf Eyewear.



Right: Teens look to emulate adult styles; this is model ES Frenzy C2 from International Eyewear.

trends and post regularly on social media to maintain presence and help generate word-of-mouth referrals," advises Nicky Clement, Marketing Manager, Eyespace.

Olivia Young, Marketing Manager of International Eyewear agrees: "Kids in this generation have got a higher presence on social media than ever before. The social media network spurs their desire to appear older and to assimilate with adults by glamourising the adult lifestyle. This impacts the eyewear that teenagers are drawn towards."

Parental Approval

While it is certainly true that children are more autonomous when it comes to decision-making, parents still need to be kept happy as they, after all, are the ones footing the bill. Consequently the optician needs to walk a careful balance between appealing to the child, and ticking the requisite comfort, durability and price concerns of the parent.

It is worth keeping to the forefront of your minds that parents often have widely differing budgets and that, on the whole, there is a resistance to spending a lot of money on frames which may end up lost or broken, especially when fitting the under 12s. "Parents are aware of fads and will want to purchase eyewear that will last for a little longer than the normal shelf life, so many will want a sensibly priced range of glasses that their child will be happy to wear. Most parents will look at style and price first and then branding afterwards," says Beal of Charmant.

The one area where parents are receptive to paying a little more is if they can be convinced that the product they are being sold is superior and will have both longevity and durability. "It is important for the parents to understand the difference a good frame makes, not just the quality of the frame but when it fits well with the quality of their child's life. It's the difference from being able to see, read and participate," says Beverly Sulteau, Vice President of Product Development, WestGroup. Tom Wolfenden Director, Wolf Eyewear, adds: "It is always good for any patient to know the features and benefits of the product you are selling to them. As independent opticians it's very important for children and parents to understand what it is that we do differently."

With a little foresight, there needn't be any conflict. "Despite the popular myth that children always want to rebel, this is often not the case and an amicable purchase where everyone is happy with the outcome, offers bonuses for all. This can be accomplished by practices offering a range of smaller frames with good styling and of a quality that offers value for money," says Beal of Charmant UK. Tom Wolfenden Director, Wolf Eyewear, agrees: "We believe that once the dispensing optician has looked at the fit, then the children should choose the frame as the more excited they are about it the more chance of them wearing it and keeping them on. My daughter wears our bright red glitter frame and she gets so many compliments that it's a struggle to get her take them off at night!"

Child Friendly Space

Once the product has been refined to reflect different demographic groups of kids, it's time to turn attention to the interior of your optical practice. "I always try to put myself in the position of the audience we're considering and so would ask opticians to think back to when they were a child, remembering how sitting in a waiting room to have your eyes tested sometimes felt like an eternity," says Paul Gaba, Managing Director, Louis Stone. Sulteau of WestGroup adds: "Opticians make their business more child friendly by engaging kids with things that stimulate them, whether that is with images, merchandising, toys, digital devices and games, and so on."

So a specified area of the store, clearly demarcated from the adult part of the business is ideal, if space is not an issue. "Opticians can have a designated children's area where they can use engaging POS (Point of Sale) to keep the area within subject yet colourful and interactive," advises Young of International Eyewear. Even if space is at a premium, books, colouring pencils, maybe even some educational material can help to engage with the young consumer. A child friendly display system is also key. "Opticians that are more kid-friendly are more likely to allow the patient to feel more at ease when choosing a frame for their child, or a child choosing their own frame. Seeing that the optician caters to kids can make their business more kid friendly, this could mean a designated area specifically to target youngsters by having a display of solely kids frames," explains a spokesperson from Marchon. Chelsey Wright, Designer at Ogi Eyewear adds: "Opticians can add kid



Fun imagery around the office, like the new Ogi Kids campaign with puppies and kids, can help to encourage a positive attitude to children to wear glasses.



Metal Crazy Animals eyewear case; new coverings for 2018, made in the UK, at Dunelm.



With digital technology influencing part of everyone's lives teens and youngsters more than any other category do everything on their phones making ZEISS's My Vision Profile App (left) very appealing. This vision analysis tool determines consumers' personal vision habits. It helps identify their visual requirements from a cross-section of lifestyle activities: day to day environment, digital usage, mobility and leisure pursuits. In less than three minutes, patients can obtain easy to understand statistics of their unique vision profile.

appeal to their business by providing toys to play with in the waiting room and lower counters and mirrors to make shopping for frames more accessible to little bodies."

Add Ons

The optician also has a handy secret weapon when it comes to securing a sale. "Kids like interesting cases, it becomes a reason for the purchase especially for girls," says Enrico Furlan, Creative Director, De Rigo. Dunelm Optical is a firm advocate of the coordinating case and has developed its own range, designed and manufactured in Great Britain. David Baker, Managing Director, Dunelm Optical explains: "Children and teenagers have more creative freedom and choice than ever before and glasses cases are an opportunity to meet practical needs with fashion requirements."

While Wright at Ogi Eyewear argues that the frame is more important, she does strongly endorse the importance of a case to protect frames. "With the phrase 'On your face or in the case,' kids can be taught to take care of their eyewear when not wearing it. A durable case makes parents feel more at ease, which is why Ogi Kids come in a clamshell hard case with a microfibre cleaning cloth," she says.

Finally, children absolutely love a free gift. There are lots of cost effective add-ons that can be given free to kids to endorse the child friendly nature of the practice. "Point of sale aimed at youngsters can include kids' Gift with Purchase" incentives for the parents, with gifts like back to school bags. These kind of things can really make an optician more appealing and family oriented," suggests a spokesperson for Marchon. ♦