**Hockey-specific – 333 words**

**You Need to *See* to *Visualize***

You know about visualization, right. In a player’s mind, he sees himself making the perfect pass to his linemate or imagines the puck whizzing past the goalie into the net. She feels the satisfaction of moving the puck down the ice and the excitement of scoring.

What if it doesn’t work for your kid? Your child winds up frustrated because his shot didn’t look the same on the ice as it did in his mind.

Before you decide hockey just isn’t her sport, let an optometrist (not the pediatrician) check her eyes. Your child might have 20/20 eyesight, but still have a vision problem. Does your child:

* Misjudge the distance of a pass?
* Shoot wide of the goal?
* Skate past the puck?

When a sport involves eye-hand coordination, the right moves depend on the accuracy and processing of the information coming from the eyes to the brain. Vision doesn’t occur in the eyes, it occurs in the brain.

According to optometrist Dr. Lynn Hellerstein, author of ***See It. Say It. Do It!,*** most children are born with healthy eyes, but they have to learn how to use their eyes and coordinate them with the rest of their body. Vision therapy can put the pieces together.

An eye exam by an optometrist can catch problems such as double vision and blurring and tracking difficulty early, and even relieve headaches, eyestrain and motion sickness. Ask the eye doctor.

* Do you do “near point testing”?
* Do you provide vision therapy or refer to someone who does?

Most kids don’t complain about a vision problem. They just avoid activities or behaviorally act out. Vision therapy can give kids strategies to up their game on the ice—and in school!

*Optometrist* ***Dr. Lynn Hellerstein****, O.D., FCOVD, FAAO, has been a pioneer in vision therapy for more than 30 years.* ***See It. Say It. Do It!*** *provides easy, practical, step-by-step strategies and activities to enhance children’s visualization skills.* [*www.LynnHellerstein.com*](http://www.LynnHellerstein.com)*.*