**Sports General – 341 words**

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

You know about visualization, right. In a player’s mind, he sees himself hit the ball over the fence or make the perfect pass, or she imagines the puck flying past the goalie into the net. He feels the satisfaction of an All-Star performance and the excitement of scoring.

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

Before you decide sports just aren’t for him, let an optometrist (not the pediatrician) check his eyes. Your child might have 20/20 eyesight, but still have a vision problem. Does your child

* Misjudge distance?
* Swing wildly, but never hit the ball?
* Drop or fail to catch the ball?
* Complain about participating in sports?

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 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)*.*