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## Press Kit

### *The Vision Therapy Center at a glance*

Goal	Primarily helps children who have vision problems that affect their ability to learn.
Description	Developmental optometrists provide “vision therapy” for children with vision problems that are often undetected by typical vision screenings. Vision problems relate not only to acuity, but eye tracking, processing, and other visual skills. Vision therapy is a series of activities that help improve visual skills.
History	Opened by Dr. Kellye Knueppel, OD, FCOVD in 1995. Has helped improve the vision of over 2,000 patients.
Locations	Brookfield and Madison, WI
Office Phone	Phone: 262-784-9201
Website	<a href="http://www.thevisiontherapycenter.com">www.thevisiontherapycenter.com</a>
Twitter	@visionhelpers
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/thevisiontherapycenter">www.facebook.com/thevisiontherapycenter</a>
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#### **Dr. Kellye Knueppel’s Areas of Expertise:**

- Vision Problems (learning related vision problems, strabismus, amblyopia, stress-induced vision problems, visual rehabilitation, sports vision)
- Vision Therapy
- Effects of 3D movies and Computer Screens on Vision
- Eye Health
- Vision Screenings
- Misdiagnosis of ADHD and Dyslexia due to Vision Problems

## **There's more to vision than meets the eye.**

Good vision requires your eyesight, visual pathways and brain to all work together. When they don't, even a person with 20/20 eyesight can experience difficulty reading, writing and processing information.

Since 1995, people of all ages have turned to The Vision Therapy Center for a solution. By using vision therapy, developmental optometrist Dr. Kellye Knueppel and her staff have delivered – improving the vision and the lives of over 2,000 patients.

## **What is vision therapy?**

Modern vision therapy has been practiced by optometrists since the 1930s. Understanding how vision therapy works begins with distinguishing between sight and vision.

Sight is the ability of the eyes to see clearly. It is one of the many visual skills that make up vision. Vision involves a wide range of additional skills, such as converging, fixation and teaming. The brain organizes all these skills and gives it meaning. Vision is the ability to understand what is being seen.

If someone needs vision therapy, it's because one or more of their visual skills is not working correctly.

To assess a person's visual skills, developmental optometrists perform a functional vision exam, which assesses the many visual skills necessary for good vision, to determine if a vision problem exists. When a vision problem is diagnosed, they may recommend vision therapy.

**Vision therapy** helps the patient develop the visual skills necessary for good vision. Optical devices and exercises are used to retrain the muscles that control the eye in order to make eye movements easier and more efficient.

In addition to retraining the muscles, the patient learns how to correctly process the visual information the brain receives from the eyes. Vision therapy can range from one session to 2-3 years and involves office visits combined with at-home activities. Most programs last from 6-9 months.

## **Who needs vision therapy?**

It's not a surprise that many of The Vision Therapy Center's patients are children who are struggling in school. The American Public Health Association states that 25% of students in grades K-6 have vision problems serious enough to impede learning. (*Source: American Optometric Association*)

These students have problems reading, can't concentrate, and may develop behavior problems. School officials may believe they have a learning disability, such as ADHD or dyslexia, but can't pinpoint a specific condition. Even more frustrating is the fact that these children are extremely bright, but simply can't function academically.

Vision problems affect adults as well. Many can function in society because they've learned to compensate for their vision problems. But they've never realized their true potential. We have countless cases of adults who have not pursued career dreams because they couldn't handle reading or academic work.

Vision therapy can help people with the following visual challenges:

**Learning related visual problems:** Conditions such as nearsightedness (myopia), eye teaming, focusing, tracking and visualization skills can all negatively affect learning.

**Lazy eye or turned eye (strabismus and amblyopia):** We offer much higher cure rates for turned eyes and/or lazy eyes when compared to conventional surgery, glasses or patching. Vision therapy works best for these conditions at an early age, but we have treated patients of all ages.

**Stress-induced vision problem:** Because our high-tech society requires a high amount of near-vision work in front of a computer screen, there is an increasing number of eyestrain, headaches and other visual related difficulties. We can help treat these problems.

**Visual rehabilitation for special population (strokes, brain injuries, multiple sclerosis, etc.):** A neurological disorder or trauma to the nervous system can affect a person's vision. We help improve the visual skills of people who have suffered traumatic brain injuries, strokes, whiplash, developmental delays, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, and other neurological ailments.

**Sports vision improvement:**

Athletes often use vision therapy to improve eye-hand coordination, visual reaction time, peripheral awareness, eye teaming, focusing, tracking and visualization skills.

**What are the benefits of vision therapy?**

When the eyes move, align, fixate and focus together, a whole new world opens up. Patients will find that:

- Learning becomes easier
- Reading levels and speed increases
- IQ scores have been known to increase
- Time spent on homework will decrease
- The ability to follow moving objects (a ball, a car) improves
- Seeing objects nearby or at a distance improves
- Visualizing mental images becomes easier

### **What are the typical symptoms of vision-related problems?**

You can spot some of the telltale signs of problems related to these visual skills if you observe several of the following behaviors:

#### **Observable traits**

- Crossed or lazy eye
- Frequent tilting of head to one side, or one shoulder is noticeably higher
- Excessive squinting, blinking, and closing of one eye
- Places head close to book while reading
- Poor visual/motor skills ("hand-eye coordination")
- Problems moving in space, frequently bumps into things or drops things, is "clumsy"
- Difficulties catching and/or throwing airborne objects
- Appears to favor the use of one eye
- Burning or itching eyes, reddened in appearance
- Headaches in forehead or temples
- Exhibits posture problems

#### **Behavior-related**

- Short attention span
- Nervous, irritable, or quickly fatigued while reading, looking at books, or doing close work
- Displays signs of emotional or developmental immaturity
- Low frustration level, doesn't get along well with others
- Experiences blurry vision
- Nausea or dizziness
- Motion sickness
- Double vision

#### **Work skills**

- Repeatedly confuses left and right directions
- Holds the book or object unusually close
- Twist or tilts head toward a book or object to favor one eye
- Frequently loses place when reading or copying from the board or paper
- Difficulty remembering what was read
- Difficulty remembering, identifying and reproducing geometric shapes
- Often reverses words
- Uses finger to read
- Rubs eyes during or after short periods of reading

- Frequently skips words and/or has to re-read, repeatedly omits small words
- Struggles with handwriting
- Moves head back and forth (instead of moving eyes)

### **How are vision problems detected?**

Prevention of vision problems requires timely detection. The only way to ensure that all the essential visual skills are working correctly is by having a Functional Vision Test.

The Vision Therapy Center provides a professional eye and vision examination, one that includes a comprehensive assessment of visual information processing, binocular function and other visual skills.

In adults and children, a Functional Vision Test is necessary whenever [symptoms of vision problems](#) are exhibited. To be proactive, the test should be performed in the following increments:

Baby – 6 months

Child – Annually

### **Why don't schools or other optometrists perform these tests?**

A large percentage of students don't have vision problems, and conducting these tests on every child would be costly. Vision screenings are less costly, but limited in scope. Many screenings involve little more than reading letters on a distance eye chart, a test that cannot determine if a child has the visual skills necessary for effective reading and learning.

### **Doesn't my regular optometrist test for vision problems?**

Not all optometrists have the advanced training or equipment required to perform a Functional Vision Test, which is why many refer their patients to The Vision Therapy Center.

### **What is included in a Functional Vision Test?**

A Functional Vision Test generally takes 60 – 90 minutes and includes a series of tests based on the patient's individual needs. The doctor will first review the patient's health and eye history, with emphasis on any visual problems and symptoms. This information is used to tailor the Functional Vision Test, which includes testing a wide range of visual skills.

These tests are for the typical learning-related vision problems. Different tests may be required for other types of patients (developmental delay, brain injury, sports vision).

### **Functional Vision Test**

The Functional Vision Test includes the Pre-Test Assessment, the Examination Assessment, and the End Visit. In some cases, an additional Perceptual Test may be required.

#### ***Pre-Test Assessment and Examination Assessment***

This test takes 60-90 minutes.

##### ***Pre-Test Assessment:***

- Binocular space perception
- Color perception
- Stereopsis
- Visual motor integration
- Developmental eye movement (“tracking”)
- Eye movements while reading

##### ***Examination Assessment:***

- Visual Acuity
- Pursuits (ability to track a moving target) and Saccades (ability to switch fixation between two targets)
- Ability to converge the eyes
- Alignment of the eyes at distance and near
- Visual Field
- Refractive Condition
- Ability to converge and diverge the eyes when looking at a distance target
- Ability to converge and diverge the eyes when looking at a near target
- Magnitude of focusing ability
- Flexibility of focusing ability
- Function in near tasks with various performance lenses
- Pupillary reflexes
- Internal and external ocular health

##### ***Perceptual Testing Assessment, if required (\$143)***

The Perceptual Testing Assessment is not always required, but the developmental optometrist may recommend it. It includes testing the following skills:

- Presence or absence of primitive reflexes
- Bilateral integration
- Laterality
- Directionality
- Visual perceptual attention

Perceptual speed  
Visual memory  
Visual motor integration and organization  
Auditory attention  
Auditory visual integration  
Auditory discrimination

### ***Patient Education Visit***

After completing the Functional Vision Test and/or the Perceptual Testing Assessment, the patient education coordinator will review the results of the testing and create an individualized treatment plan. Both the results of the testing and the doctor's recommended treatment plan will be presented to the patient and/or the patient's legal guardian(s) by the patient education coordinator at this 90-minute visit. The purpose of the Patient Education Visit is to provide ample time to discuss the testing results and treatment plan as well as answer questions you may have.

### **Will my child need vision therapy if he or she gets a Functional Vision Test?**

No. The vision exam is conducted to determine if you or your child even *has* a vision problem. It's not uncommon for us to find that only a change in a glasses prescription is needed. But the testing is critical to get to the root cause of a child's learning issues.

### **Is the Functional Vision Test and any resultant vision therapy covered by insurance?**

This depends on the level of coverage provided in your health insurance policy. We are happy to provide you with a preauthorization letter you can give to your insurance company to determine the level of coverage. In the event you don't have coverage, we have a variety of payment plans that can fit any budget.

### **What is the treatment?**

Vision Therapy is a non-surgical treatment program. Each program is individualized to your specific condition. It works in tandem with the comprehensive exam – treatment is provided only for the identified problem.

A typical vision therapy treatment program includes the following:

**Vision activities to improve or build visual skills.** Patients perform certain visual activities and procedures that will help correct the visual functioning of their eyes. These will be performed both in our offices and at home. Newly acquired visual skills will be reinforced and made automatic through repetition and by integration with motor and cognitive skills.

**Office visits to build visual skills and keep patients on track.** For the best and most efficient progress, regular visits to the office are required. Many important visual activities are done in the office that cannot be done at home. Proper

performance of supportive home activities is also monitored. Office visits are generally 45 minutes in length. Many patients come weekly but frequency of the visits will depend on the diagnosis and severity of the problem.

**Use of various treatment devices.** The Vision Therapy Center uses a variety of treatment devices. These can include many of the following tools:

Corrective lenses

Therapeutic lenses

Prism lenses

Optical filters

Brock strings

Eye patches or occluders

Vectograms, Tranaglyphs & Stereo objects

Electronic targets with timing mechanisms

Computer software

Vestibular (balance) equipment

Visual-motor-sensory integration training devices

## **FAQs**

### **Is vision therapy only for children?**

Good vision is learned, and while the body's largest development occurs during the early years, visual skills continue to be learned and developed throughout a person's life. These skills are shaped by health, one's personal experience and the environment.

Because these visual skills are related to muscles and the function of the brain, they can be learned at any age. This is why many sports athletes use vision therapy; it's a method of training their muscles and brain to improve performance.

### **What is a developmental optometrist?**

Understanding the different types of eye doctors will help you understand the different specialties of eye care:

#### **Optometrist – OD**

The Optometrist areas of specialty include prescribing glasses and contact lenses and treating pediatric, geriatric and sports vision issues. An optometrist receives a minimum of seven years of college and graduate education to receive their Doctor of Optometry (OD). All optometrists learn basic vision therapy, but to practice it requires postdoctoral training.

#### **General Optometrist – OD**

The General Optometrist is also trained to give routine health care and refraction. They are trained to detect ocular diseases and specific health problems.

#### **Developmental Optometrist – OD**

Vision therapy is practiced by a developmental optometrist (sometimes referred to as a behavioral or functional optometrist). The Developmental Optometrist believes visual problems may be the result of developmental or environmental factors.

#### **Ophthalmologist – MD**

The ophthalmologist is a medical doctor who specializes in diseases of the eye and eye surgery.

#### **Optician**

A technician who produces and dispenses optical lenses, glasses and other equipment.

## **About The Vision Therapy Center, Inc.**

Established in 1995 by Dr. Kellye Knueppel, The Vision Therapy Center, Inc. has two locations dedicated solely to vision therapy. In addition to Dr. Knueppel, a team of fully-trained specialists work with patients of all ages, from infants to senior citizens.

The Vision Therapy Center works cooperatively with other optometrists, teachers, reading specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, chiropractors and other professionals.

In April of 2009, The Vision Therapy Center opened a new Madison location. Now two locations service patients in southern Wisconsin:

### ***Brookfield***

13255 West Bluemound Road, Suite 200  
Brookfield, WI 53005  
(262) 784-9201

### ***Madison***

4781 Hayes Road, Suite 103  
Madison, WI 53704  
(608) 406-2652

## **Our Developmental Optometrists**

### **Dr. Kellye Kneuppel**



Dr. Kneuppel is a Developmental Optometrist specializing in vision related learning problems, sports vision, strabismus, and rehabilitative optometry. She is board certified in vision development as a Fellow of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development.

Dr. Kneuppel was named the Optometrist of the Year in 2006 by the Wisconsin Optometric Association, and is currently the President-Elect of the Wisconsin Optometric Association. She is also a member of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, the Optometric Extension Program, the American Optometric Association Sports Vision Section, the American Optometric Association Vision Rehabilitation Section and the American Public Health Association. She serves on the board of directors for the Vision Leads Foundation.

She is the Clinical Director in Wisconsin for the Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes Program. Because of her expertise in vision development in special needs populations, Dr. Kneuppel has been asked to participate in the Opening Eyes Program at Special Olympics World Games in Greece, China, Japan, Ireland, Alaska and Idaho over the past several years. She frequently speaks to groups about the signs and symptoms of vision related problems.

Dr. Kneuppel completed a residency in vision therapy at the State University of New York State College of Optometry after graduating from the Southern California College

of Optometry. Dr. Knueppel received her undergraduate degree from Washington University in St. Louis.

Dr. Knueppel frequently lectures around the United States to general and developmental optometrists on vision therapy, therapeutic lens prescribing, neuro-optometric rehabilitation and vision therapy practice management. She has presented to the Wisconsin Optometric Association, the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, the American Optometric Association Day, and the Invitational Lens Symposium.

**Dr. Brandon Begotka**



Dr. Begotka received his undergraduate degree from Carthage College in Kenosha, WI and graduated with honors from Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago, IL.

He is a member of the American Optometric Association and the College of Optometrists in Vision Development. As President of the Milwaukee Optometric Society, Dr. Begotka serves on the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Optometric Association.

He shares Dr. Knueppel's relentless drive to stay at the forefront of developments in the field. He travels extensively to conferences throughout the country, meeting and sharing insights with other top optometrists.

Dr. Begotka is married and enjoys a rather varied set of hobbies, ranging from playing bass in a Chicago-area band to shooting trap and sporting clays.

**Questions?**

*For media questions, or to request an article or an interview:*

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*To request a presentation by Dr. Knueppel or The Vision Therapy Center staff:*

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