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February 12, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Children in even an affluent district have eye-tracking and eye-teaming problems which are only accidentally discovered. In my teaching life I have had about 30% of regular education students who needed intervention by a developmental optometrist; in groups of children who are already targeted as non-readers, I have had up to 70% of children who needed vision help.

As a teacher of reading in grades 1-6 for nine years (in the Washington state Learning Assistance Program) and as a teacher of first grade and Kindergarten for the past six years in the Shoreline (WA) school district (after 18 years teaching first grade in Maine), I have seen many puzzling children. These are the children who ought to be able to read and can't.

I have studied with developmental movement and vision therapists to try to begin to understand what to look for and whom to refer for what. During these past fifteen years I have developed a set of movement and vision activities and exercises to help teachers with their puzzling children. (I have published these in my latest book, Red Flags for Primary Teachers: Vision and Neurodevelopmental Issues and What to Do About Them.)

I wholeheartedly support the possibility of a focus on developing a vision screening system for ALL children of school age. Children, and teachers, become very discouraged when there does not seem to be a reason for their failure with teaching and learning reading.

It would be wonderful for children and for teachers if initiatives in Washington State could come to fruition. I hope that Microsoft will give serious consideration to the idea of a symposium in 2014 on vision and learning/education, to begin this much-needed process.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Katie Johnson  
Teacher