

Module: **Visual Conditions and Functional Vision:
 Early Intervention Issues**

**Session 1: Working With Families and
 Eye Care Professionals**

Handout A: Eye Care Professionals

Topor, I. (2003). *Eye care professionals*. Chapel Hill, NC: Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments, FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH.

Eye Specialist	What they do	Training
Ophthalmologist (MD)	Perform surgery Diagnose and treat eye diseases Test for visual acuity and visual field Prescribe glasses and contacts, and, in some cases, low vision devices and medication	4 years college 4 years medical school 1 year general medical internship with a choice in pediatrics, internal medicine, or general surgery 3 years ophthalmology residency 1 to 2 year fellowship for subspecialty of pediatric ophthalmology
Optometrist (OD)	Diagnose vision problems and prescribes glasses and contact lens. May work with ophthalmologists to provide pre- and postoperative care May conduct low vision exams and provide vision-training activities if a specialist in low vision Some states allow optometrists to prescribe medication. Some optometrists may practice behavioral optometry.	4 years of college 3 to 4 years optometry school

Eye Specialist	What they do	Training
Low vision specialists	<p>Test for visual acuity and visual field</p> <p>Introduce patient to near and/or distance viewing low vision aids</p> <p>Recommend adaptations to patient's home and work environment</p>	<p>Low vision specialists may be licensed ophthalmologists or optometrists with credentials as diplomates or certified low vision specialists.</p> <p>Certified low vision specialist may be educators with certification from either the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals or the PA College of Optometry.</p>
Orthoptist	<p>Evaluate and treat disorders of vision, eye movements, and eye alignment in children and adults</p> <p>Conduct diagnostic tests on patients with visual disorders, including lazy eye, strabismus (misaligned eyes), and double vision</p> <p>Help the ophthalmologist design a treatment plan that may involve treatment by the orthoptist, surgical treatment by the ophthalmologist, or some combination of the two</p>	<p>Orthoptist programs are 2 years.</p> <p>A baccalaureate degree is required; however, admission criteria vary from school to school and exceptions are considered on an individual basis.</p> <p>In most programs, preparation and presentation of a scientific paper is usually required during the second year of education.</p> <p>Extensive clinical experience is part of every program.</p>
Optician	Grind and fit lenses prescribed by the ophthalmologist or optometrist	<p>1 year of optical courses</p> <p>2 years apprenticeship under certified optician</p>
Ocularist	Design and fit artificial eyes (prostheses) and scleral shell	<p>Requires board certification</p> <p>Candidate takes exam through the National Examining Board of Ocularists.</p>