

CHILDREN'S OPTICARE

What is Children's Opticare?

Children's Opticare will help families receiving the Manitoba Child Benefit to pay for the cost of prescription eyeglasses for their children.

What is the Manitoba Child Benefit?

The Manitoba Child Benefit was introduced in January 2008 and provides up to \$420 per child per year to help low-income working families with the cost of raising children. The following table shows Manitoba Child Benefit levels and allowable income ranges:

In March 2011 8,600 children received the Manitoba Child Benefit.

Who will be eligible for Children's Opticare?

Families who receive the Manitoba Child Benefit will be eligible for Children's Opticare, provided they do not have optical coverage through another provider.

What benefits will be provided under Children's Opticare?

The maximum payment per child would be \$84, or 80% of the current EIA optical fee schedule rate for eyeglasses (\$105). Benefits may be higher for children with special vision needs. For example, a child may require a high index lens, which the program would pay for on top of the regular rate.

How will families access optical benefits under Children's Opticare?

Families will pay for their children's prescription glasses upfront and then submit a receipt to Family Services and Consumer Affairs for reimbursement. Reimbursement will be up to 80% of current income assistance optical guidelines.

When will Children's Opticare start and how much will it cost?

Children's Opticare will be implemented in January 2012. Full year costs for the new program are estimated at \$112,000.

How can families apply for the Manitoba Child Benefit and Children's Opticare?

Families who are eligible to receive the Manitoba Child Benefit, and who do not have optical coverage from another program, will automatically be eligible for Children's Opticare when it comes into effect in January 2012. For more information or to apply for the Manitoba Child Benefit, families can call 1-800-563-8793 or visit www.gov.mb.ca/fs/assistance/mcb.html.