



Success in the Kids Business

Frame Board Management – Create a Great Kids Frame Board

Frame Board Management is essential to the success of a dispensary, especially in the competitive children's eyewear market. Through research and preparation, you can create a great kids frame board that will meet the needs of each of your customers.

There are several guidelines you may wish to consider when building your kids frame board. You should:

- Offer a Variety of Frame Materials
- Offer a Variety of Styles and Colors
- Purchase from Experienced Vendors
- Refresh Inventory at the Best Time

There are additional considerations for maximizing your kids' offerings and profits that we will address later in this paper.

Offer a Variety of Frame Materials

Metals

Metal frames are always a popular choice for kids, as they provide adjustability necessary for smaller faces. Children's noses are not fully developed, and metal frames usually have adjustable nose pads that can provide a better bridge fit.

Offer a variety of metal frames, such as lightweight steel and titanium. Memory metals are also a good option for kids who tend to be tough on their frames. Memory metal frames can retain their shape even if twisted or bent.

Acetates

Today's eyewear trends have led to increased requests for stylish acetate frames, especially among kids. While metal frames are still a popular choice, metal purchases compared to acetate purchases are now almost 50/50.

Colorful, highly patterned acetates are on trend and popular with today's kids. 57% of eye care professionals found an increase in acetate frame sales,¹ illustrating a recent surge in popularity.

¹ 20/20 magazine



Metal/Acetate Combination

Metal/acetate combination frames offer benefits of both materials: style *and* adjustability. These combo frames offer the silhouette of the rimless look, but with a bit more character for your trend-seeking customers

Offer a Variety of Styles and Colors

One of the most common mistakes in kids' frame board management is not offering enough color variety! To reach your entire kids demographic, each of your collections should include color, but in different saturations and variations:

- Bright colors for younger children
 - Various shades of pink
 - Primary colors
 - Bright lime green, blue
 - Sparkles, glitter, shiny accents

- Colorful yet muted palette for older kids and tweens
 - Muted colors, like purples and blues
 - Deeper shades like red and burgundy
 - Black or brown with color accents

Offering a range colors has been a proven success. For example, statistics show that for girls eyewear, shades of purple, berry and pink sell twice as much as shades of blue. Use these sale trends to appeal to kids in your dispensary, and carry different saturations and variations to appeal to various skin tones.

Many of today's kids love trendy designs and embellishments, and interesting designs often help sell frames to parents. Some of today's design trends include:

- artistic, highly patterned styles
 - animal prints
 - tie dye
- graphic accents and pop icons
 - piercings
 - flat metal charms
- sparkle, glitter, and jewel accents
 - embossed hearts
 - stones
- sporty accents
 - rubberized temple sleeves
 - metal rivets



Familiarize yourself with children's fashion and eyewear trends through media outlets and your sales consultants, who may offer specialized tools to boost your appeal to kids.

Eye Shape

It's also important to provide a variety of eye shapes that will meet the needs of every kid and complement small faces. Young children often wear rounder frames that have more height. Softer shapes, like ovals, highlight the eyes and soften cheekbones. Older kids tend to prefer more mature, "grown up," on trend shapes like Wayfarer styles and modified rectangles.

Trends

Today's kids are highly connected to popular fashion, celebrities, movies, and many products that are "in." These trends also affect their eyewear choices. They want the fresh, hip looks of today, and they are not afraid to stand out.

Kid's eyewear selections are influenced ultimately by their sense of personal style. Kids today wear glasses not only to improve their vision, but to make a statement. Many are into more "grown up" eyewear styles, but not *too* grown up: they want to look like their older brothers and sisters, friends, and young celebrities.

Older kids or "twens" base their eyewear selections on things like adult celebrity styles, popular brand names, the latest trends and the desire to be accepted as "cool." These are two vastly different frame styles that need to be approached in your practice based on your target demographic.

Older kids will often research their own styles before even entering a dispensary, and they familiarize themselves with branded eyewear. Parents listen to what their kids want, and most often purchase what they like, because they want them to be comfortable wearing their glasses.

Purchase from Experienced Vendors

Buy from a variety of experienced vendors. Typically, dispensaries that carry kids' frames will buy from 2 to 4 vendors, depending on the size of the dispensary. Dispensaries specializing in kids' frames may carry 20 or more lines, offering 1500 or more frame selections. However, averaging 50 kids' frames in your collection will allow you to provide a diverse selection.

Listen to what your customers want, and keep record of it. Then compare vendor collections to determine who carries the brands and selections that will appeal to your own customers.

Sales consultants can help you determine which brands and styles would appeal to kids in your practice based on your area's demographics.



Refresh Inventory at the Best Time

Refresh your kids' inventory to generate greater profit. Back to school is a great time, as kids often want to change their look as they start the new school year. Also, new trends, colors, and styles are often introduced with the change of seasons. However, if you refresh your frame board year round, you are sure to always have the most popular styles available.

Additional Considerations

Now that you have the basis for creating a great kids frame board, there are some additional considerations that go along with providing the perfect frames.

Lenses

Specialty lenses are an outstanding way to help kids customize their eyewear, while adding to your profits. Popular lens options include:

Polycarbonate lenses provide the greatest impact resistance and durability. Many customers prefer polycarbonate lenses particularly for athletic children who play sports that may cause impact shattering.

Photochromic lenses are a great option for kids who are active outdoors or live in a sunny climate. This eliminates the need to change glasses, which helps forgetful kids remember their eyewear.

Photochromatic lenses are also popular due to the fact that they block harmful UV rays. In fact, experts say most people get over 80 % of their lifetime exposure to ultraviolet radiation by the time they are 18 years old.²

No-Glare lenses are also helpful with today's evolving classroom's technology. From computer screens to electronic Smartboards, glare is everywhere. These lenses can help kids see and learn better, while increasing your sale.

Scratch Resistant lenses are perfect for kids who are notoriously tough on their eyewear. The coating on these lenses resists scratches and smudges, and are easy for kids to clean.

For every shape and style, there's is a price point to match. The important thing is deciding which price point works best for you dispensary. Consider these:

- Visit other dispensaries in your area to better understand pricing strategies for comparable brands and styles.
- Study your kids' eyewear sales over the course of a year to determine how much customers in your area are willing to spend.

² www.opticaladvisor.com



- Review Internet sites to determine popular price points.
- Offer discounts or coupons on second pairs to help promote kids' sales
- Offer deeper discounts on slower-selling frames (rather than return them.) Returned frames cannot generate revenue; a discounted frame can.

Managed Care

When selling to customers who are taking advantage of a managed care plan, it's important to position yourself as an expert on eye care. Sell what looks good on the child and has the best optics for their needs.

Stress the benefits of quality optical products and the importance of a well-warranted frame for active children for safe, effective eyewear.

To drive up sales, don't tell Managed Care customers that frames are "not an option with their plan" because the cost is not completely absorbed by the plan. Instead, discuss how their managed care plan will significantly reduce the cost of the frames that fit their medical needs and style. Suggest that the customer use their managed care funds as a "discount" toward the eyewear their child *really* wants.

Since kids have to often be reminded to wear their glasses, many parents will be willing to buy out of plan frames if their child likes them, to ensure the child will wear them.

Cater to every patient and every pocketbook. Set up your frame board with Good, Better, Best frames to help consumers easily identify the frames that will best meet their individual need.

The bottom line: the children's market is one of the most exciting and fastest growing segments of today's eyewear industry. When you properly prepare yourself and make the commitment to children's eyewear, you're sure to reap many rewards.

Sources:

- www.opticaladvisor.com
- 20/20 Magazine
- Julie Bart, Pediatric Optician

The Glasses Menagerie Eyecare for Kids, Minneapolis, MN