



Merchandising and Selling in the Dispensary

Merchandising has been proven to boost frame sales, and a solid merchandising plan can give your location even more credibility in the marketplace and help set you apart from mass market and chain retailers. Consider adopting a variety of merchandising strategies to help you meet your sales goals, even in the most challenging economic times.

Selection and Inventory Control

The first step in merchandising is having the right inventory for your demographic. Once you're in the kids' eyewear business, it's important to have frames that appeal to every kid. To ensure that your best selling frames are always on your frame board, consider implementing an inventory control system. Ask your vendors if they offer automatic reorder plans that will help you maintain your frame board and keep best sellers in stock and on display.

Selling from the Chair

Reevaluate your sales strategies for kids' eyewear. Selling right from the exam chair is highly effective, and a conversation between the child, parent, and yourself can help you gather information to increase your sale. While discussing eye care options:

- Find out which sports or activities the child is involved in, and suggest specialized eyewear.
- Use double Rx pads so that two sets of lenses can be easily prescribed: one for regular lenses and one for specialty lenses or a "back up" pair.
- Make sure to ask about previous eyewear purchases. You can identify issues with eyewear care, such as scratching, and suggest special lens treatments.

Selling in the Dispensary

Educate your staff to continue the sale after the exam. The more you educate your associates, the better your results will be. When training your staff on selling to kids, following these simple guidelines:

- **Know your products.** Make sure your staff understands the current trends in both retail fashion and eyewear markets and how the two work together.
- **Know your customers.** Ask kids (and parents!) about their hobbies and interests. Are they athletes? Each answer should help your staff zero in on what eyewear they should be selling. Your ability to provide personal service is an advantage over larger retailers.
- **Educate your customers.** Just as you should be selling from the exam chair, your staff should reinforce your message regarding the benefits of special treatments and lenses for kids.
- **Sell multiple pairs.** Most kids need two pairs of eyewear to keep up with their busy lives and growing needs. Give your staff the authority to offer special discounts for second pairs of frames, and advertise specials such as a frame and lens combination.



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. Offer options in a menu style that lists frame and lens packages as Good, Better, and Best to show the benefits of each price point. Try suggesting that the customer use their managed care funds as a "discount" toward the eyewear their child *really* wants. Stress the benefits of quality optics and the importance of a well-warranted frame for active children.

To boost 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, tell them how their managed care plan will significantly reduce the cost of the frames that fit their medical needs and style. Since some kids often have to be reminded to wear their glasses, many parents will be willing to buy out-of-plan frames if their child truly likes them and will wear them.

Pricing

Create a Balance of Price Points

For every frame shape and style, there is a price point to match. The important thing is deciding which price points work best for your customers.

- Compile data to better understand your target demographic.
- Visit other dispensaries in your area to better understand pricing strategies for comparable brands and styles.
- Study your eyewear sales over the course of a year to determine just how much customers in your area are willing to spend.
- Offer deeper discounts on slower-selling frames (rather than return them). Returned frames cannot generate revenue, but discounted frames can.

Specialty Lenses

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

Photochromic lenses eliminate the need for kids to change glasses, a great option for kids who are active outdoors or live in a sunny climate. Photochromic lenses 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!¹

Polycarbonate lenses provide durability and impact resistance for active kids, particularly athletic kids who require tougher lenses.

¹ www.opticaladvisor.com



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 is easy for kids to clean.

Advertising and Marketing

Now that you're increasing your kids' business, reach out to families by advertising. Whether you use direct mail, newspaper advertising, web or email marketing, it's important to be clear and consistent in your messaging.

Direct mail

Whether sending simple recall notices or notifying customers of a special sale, **direct mail** can be an inexpensive and effective way to get noticed.

Newspaper advertising is an effective tool for reaching out to parents. Consider placing a back to school ad in August to attract customers before the rush starts.

Website

Today, customers are more likely to remember your web address than your phone number. Creating a website does not have to be a huge (or expensive) undertaking. At minimum, your website should include:

- Address, phone/fax number, and email address
- Hours of operation
- Products and services offered

If you hire a website development company, you can incorporate features such as shopping cart technology (for sales), online appointment scheduling, frame catalogs, and virtual try on.

Email marketing is a cost-effective way to reach out to existing and potential customers. There really are no limits on how you can use email messages for your business.

- Send discount offers for kids' eyewear in August and September
- Send email recall notices in lieu of postcards
- Deploy email blasts with special offers and discounts during your slow season



Visual Merchandising and P.O.P.

Visual merchandising and P.O.P. can help you create an environment that will draw customers into your dispensary. Be creative! Displays should be as fun and engaging as kids themselves.

- Leverage the branding power of your top licensed brands and use displays, window clings, and counter cards that feature licensed characters to attract kids.
- At the end of summer, appeal to children with fun, back-to-school motifs
- Display frames in a fun and different way. Use color and familiar characters to attract children to *want* to wear your frames.

Merchandising Tips

Kids' eyewear should be visible! Create a separate section, like a "Kids' Corner" with bright colors and age appropriate P.O.P.

- Add toys or a television to attract children to the Kids' Corner before the exam. Chances are a few frames will catch their eye before the consultation begins!
- Try to have at least one character in your Kids' Corner wearing glasses. This helps kids to relate to eyewear and associate it with their beloved character.
- Place eyewear at eye level to attract kids to frames as soon as they arrive.
- Use bright and effective signage to capture kids' attention while displaying information that appeals to parents.

With a little effort, merchandising can help turn your littlest customers into lifetime customers.

To learn more about kids' merchandising, contact ClearVision Optical at 800.645.3733, or visit us online at cvoptical.com.