

Dr. Charles Boulet

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Press Release

*For immediate release*

## **New Book Highlights Deficiencies in Child Care and Education**

Alberta Optometrist and former highschool science teacher Dr. Charles Boulet recently published '[Nearsighted White Kids: A Journey Into Vision Blindness](#).' The book is born out of a need in the child development community for essential understanding of human vision beyond the basic eye chart.

Child vision needs are being neglected due to a lack of basic understanding of vision. As a rule, the people who teach our children, assess them, treat them, and make lifelong decisions for them are working blind. **One in four children has a significant visual impediment**, and currently there are no requirements to assess child vision prior to starting school in Alberta. This leads to disaster that occurs daily in every school on the planet, and in every pediatrician's clinic.

When children enter school, they are required to attend endless hours of 'near work' with dwindling hours of physical development and time outdoors. There are measurable consequences to this. While the overall neglect of vision is critical, the situation is becoming exacerbated by over-reliance on computers and the expansion of standardized testing.

The critical disregard for basic child vision needs leads to several serious concerns.

- **Self-Reporting:** The current practice is to have children self-report and this is entirely unacceptable medical practice. Diagnosing visual dysfunction is a lot harder than, "can you read/see this?" Asking children to self report vision issues can amount to neglect/abuse.
- **Human rights:** Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right. Given that many people are left without the basic help they need starting at a young age. This problem is measurably worse in Aboriginal communities.
- **Systemic racism:** Studies show that the rates of visual dysfunction vary by ethnicity, and that Indigenous children struggle with even greater rates of vision dysfunction and impairment. We need to consider what it means that education is less accessible to some people and some groups.
- **Costs to education and healthcare:** Undiagnosed visual impediments are easily misdiagnosed since symptoms often overlap with other conditions (such as ADHD, dyslexia and learning disabilities). Unneeded medical and psychological testing

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drive up healthcare costs when basic eye exams can quickly and cost-effectively help.

- As one current example, we need to consider the validity of standardized testing when we have no idea whether the children tested have any sort of significant [Visual Impediments to Learning and Development \(VILD\)](#).

## Who it's for

Nearsighted White Kids (NWK) is a technical book, but presented in a consumable way for anyone interested in human vision. This book explains why our blindness to the basics of human vision impairs our ability to respond to children's needs, leaving them in a neglected or compromised state.

NWK breaks down the basic elements of human vision and describes how they impact function and development. The last half of the book takes a broader look at issues that impact schools, child development, and the costs of ignoring vision: the cost of vision blindness.

## About the Author

Dr. Charles Boulet graduated from Pacific University's College of Optometry in 2008. In addition to his Doctorate of Optometry, Dr. Boulet has completed a Bachelor of Science in neural sciences/neuropsychology and a Bachelor of Education, both from the University of Alberta. During his years teaching sciences, Dr. Boulet (then Monsieur Boulet) was involved in curriculum development and standard assessment.

Dr. Boulet now spends most of his time in primary-care practice, where he addresses a variety of visual concerns, specializing in vision development rehabilitation and ongoing instruction of rehabilitation therapists. As a passionate child vision advocate, who spent years researching and working with under-served populations in Alberta (especially local Indigenous communities). Dr. Boulet has published numerous articles on the subject in and outside of the academic world.

## See also

Links to 'Nearsighted White Kids: A Journey Into Vision Blindness' can also be found at [drboulet.com](http://drboulet.com)

Reappraisal of the historical myopia epidemic in native Arctic communities  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34533229/>