Eyes, ears, noses and throats

The recently-opened Children's Eye & ENT provides specialised services that cover the spectrum of children's eye and ENT challenges.

This is the first eye and ENT private medical practice for children in Singapore. Its founders, both mothers of young children, want to create an inviting environment for children who need treatment. "We know the anxieties that kids experience, and we also understand a parent's concerns," explains Dr Dawn Teo (left), one of the founding partners.

Adds Dr Zena Lim, the practice's other founding partner: "It takes a lot more patience, commitment and time to treat children. They need to feel safe and comfortable." Hence the clinic's open area where kids can play, watch TV and just feel at home. "Sometimes we even examine kids in this area, where they are most relaxed."

The Children's Eye and ENT Centre is essentially a three-in-one practice, providing eye and ENT specialty care for babies and children, and adult eye and ENT services as well.

"It's a one-stop clinic for families, and we want to build relationships over time. As medical information becomes more accessible, there is a strong trend of parents wanting to have their children checked by a paediatric sub-specialist rather than a general eye or ENT doctor, and once the trust is established, the relationship builds over time," explains Dr Lim, who, like Dr Teo, has been in practice for about 15 years.

Dr Teo is a Paediatric ENT specialist and Dr Lim is a Paediatric Ophthalmologist. Both sub-specialties are relatively uncommon in Singapore.

"Due to the proximity of the nose and the eye, several eye and ENT conditions can occur together, and it is important for the eye and ENT doctor to work closely together." said Dr Teo, adding that even before they set up the practice in November 2014, they would often see patients who required both ENT and eye care. Together at their new practice, they treat patients, from newborns to teenagers, for a host of issues including allergy-related eye and ENT issues, sinus problems that lead to eye inflammation, tear duct issues, and developmental problems that require both eye and ENT checks and screenings.

The most common conditions they see include, for paediatric ENT, snoring, tonsil problems, allergic rhinitis, sinus conditions, speech and voice issues, blocked ears, ear infections, and hearing loss.

The common eye issues are related to myopia, astigmatism, lazy eyes, squint or misaligned eyes, itchy eyes, frequent blinking, styes and infections, paediatric cataract and retina problems.

Many of today's paediatric eye conditions are a result of genetics and what is referred to as "near work", meaning reading and using devices at very close range. The popularity of electronic devices, gaming, and of course, homework and studying, all take their toll over time. The rising incidence of myopia in Singapore children is a case in point.

On their part, parents too want the best for the children, and are acutely conscious of how certain conditions affect their children's performance in school. One such condition encountered in the ENT practice is sleep apnoea, which often presents with snoring or noisy breathing during sleep. This is a potentially serious condition in which breathing is disrupted during sleep resulting in decreased oxygen levels to the brain. Untreated, it can affect school performance, concentration and may lead to health issues in adulthood.

Childhood is a precious time that is meant to be cherished and enjoyed. In the words of John Betjeman, "Childhood is measured out by sounds, smells and sights, before the dark hour of reason grows." Dedicated to offering the best treatment approaches to their young patients, The Children's Eye and ENT Centre seeks to ensure your child remains in the pink of health to enjoy and grow in this special period of their lives.

The Children's Eye & ENT Centre

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