



The Challenge and the Privilege of Working with Children

Christina Prescott, M.D., Ph.D.

Imagine if you could be in the room when a baby sees her parents for the first time—three months after she was born and all thanks to your skill. Christina Prescott, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of ophthalmology, doesn't have to because it's her job. She is a pediatric corneal transplantation specialist. "To be part of such a moment is an indescribable honor," she said.

She doesn't focus only on infants, however. Children of all ages come to see her at the Wilmer Eye Institute. "Since there are so few pediatric cornea surgeons, I have patients from around the world," she said. One reason she chose to build her practice at Wilmer is because of the Johns Hopkins Medicine International Office, which coordinates travel so she can focus on helping the children.

She also chose Hopkins because of the staff. "I am able to work with

the pediatric anesthesia team of Johns Hopkins, which is excellent," she said. "And Wilmer has a close relationship with Tissue Banks International. The eye bank contacts me when they have young donor tissue available." Because of this, she can often age-match tissue, which benefits her patients.

Prescott is grateful for any advantage she can offer her patients because pediatric corneal transplantation presents more challenges than adult

transplantation. "The success rate is much poorer in pediatric patients, due to increased risk of rejection and infection as well as other eye problems that often co-exist with corneal pathology in children with congenital problems," she explained. This situation means Prescott will see her pediatric transplant patients as many as four times as often as her adult patients.

"Because we see each other so often, over such a long period, the relationship that I develop with each child and his or her family is quite special," she said. "It is rewarding to watch the children grow and develop and know that my surgery enabled them to do things that they would otherwise not be able to do." ■