Fitting custom-made soft contact lenses has become significantly more straightforward these days with advances in contact lens designs. In the pediatric contact lens specialty setting of my own practice, it is not uncommon for patients and parents to seek a second opinion, which often requires a highly customized solution to meet their visual demands. Practitioners will differ in their decision to embrace gas permeable (GP) or soft lenses for the first-time pediatric patient with astigmatism. However, it is my opinion that soft contact lenses present a tremendous advantage in the adaptation phase of pediatric patients. The exceptional initial comfort helps them to embrace the fitting process of this material choice. Because the lacrimal lens power is reduced to an insignificant amount, the astigmatic correction has to be completely corrected by the contact lens. Lens stability, movement and rotation play a major role in the fitting of patients with astigmatism.

Addressing the above fitting goals with the latest in lens design and manufacturing technology allows clinicians to design a highly stable and precise toric soft lens, taking into consideration different variables, whether water content, lens diameter, base curve, prism and/or amount and location of astigmatic correction.

There are numerous companies that offer customized soft lens correction (Art Optical’s Intelliwave®, Accu Lens’ AccuSoft, CooperVision’s Hydrasoft toric, etc.) In our busy specialty pediatric contact lens practice, it has been beneficial, if not essential, to develop a close working relationship with our contact lens laboratory. We have chosen SpecialEyes as our manufacturer of choice for these lenses.

The advantage to using a SpecialEyes designed toric lens is that it is a back surface design that is stabilized via custom amounts of prism ballast giving the practitioner the option of adjusting the amount of prisms from one diopter of prism up to four diopters. The optic zone can be customized as well, up to 10.0 mm, with a standard optic zone of 8.0 mm. The lens design is based off of an Arc Length Design, which establishes a relationship between the cornea and the contact lens, aiding in the alignment of the posterior lens surface and the cornea. The result is an improved posterior lens-corneal alignment that leads to better comfort and improved hydration that plays an important role, especially after a few hours of wear with astigmatic and multifocal/presbyopic patients. The fitting calculator uses a mathematical calculation along with keratometric values and HVID to determine base curve and diameter.

When considering the use of a multifocal soft lens for myopia control, the ability to customize parameters is paramount. Controlling the optic zone diameter is a great tool to dictate the transition to the add power and the management of the peripheral blur.

When it comes to practice management and building an enthusiastic patient base, being able to address specific vocational and avocational challenges is a “win-win” situation.

A contact lens with a high level of stability, providing superior acuity and exceptional comfort is essential when it comes to meeting the special needs of the patient, such as on the football field or the shooting range. Using the SpecialEyes Design toric lenses with in-house sports tints gives additional opportunities to set ones’ practice apart from the more “traditional” or “basic” approach.

Another important consideration is a rapid manufacturing response. The predictable turnaround of two to four working days from SpecialEyes’ highly advanced facility allows us to maintain efficiency and patient satisfaction. Equally important, particularly with pediatric patients, is that the diagnostic and supply lenses are covered by a full warranty against tears and defects. This is an advantage and comfort to the parents, and consequently, builds a stronger and longer lasting relationship with the family.

One of the most essential pillars of a specialty contact lens practice is the ability to build patient loyalty through advanced technology and precision in the delivery of care. Using customized contact lenses allows the practitioner to deliver optimum patient care by addressing visual demands and lifestyle while maintaining good ocular health. For a practice to be successful, it must continuously evolve and adapt new technologies and designs. This, in turn, will lead to more successful contact lens wearers, who will appreciate that their care is managed with the highest level of competence.