

## HOW TO ACCESS SCREENING

Children who attend preschool will be tested at school. Parents will be informed in advance of the screening by the preschool.

For those children who are absent or not cooperative during the screening at school, parents will receive an invitation letter or the direct contact details of the orthoptist for an examination at one of the district surgeries.

Children who are not enrolled at a preschool will be invited by letter to attend a free test at one of the Local Health Authority surgeries.

Children who already wear glasses are excluded from the programme.

## RESULTS OF THE SCREENING TEST

If the result is negative and there is no amblyopia, the orthoptist will provide a report that the parent can show to their paediatrician, with a recommendation to repeat the examination after one year or in the first year of primary school.

If the result is positive and there is some evidence of amblyopia, the child will be sent for second level screening. An eye examination can be booked through the CUP central booking service (calendar with dedicated appointments). During the eye examination, glasses will be prescribed if necessary as well as any amblyopic treatment (patching), and subsequent regular check-ups.

## CONTACTS

Certified email: [screeningortottico@pec.ausl.re.it](mailto:screeningortottico@pec.ausl.re.it)

To find out more (multilingual materials)

[www.ausl.re.it/screening-ortottico](http://www.ausl.re.it/screening-ortottico)



SERVIZIO SANITARIO REGIONALE  
EMILIA-ROMAGNA  
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## ORTHOPTIC SCREENING FOR EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF AMBLYOPIA (LAZY EYE)



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## WHAT IS AMBLYOPIA?

Amblyopia, commonly known as “lazy eye”, is reduced vision in one eye which cannot be corrected by glasses or other optical aids, caused by abnormal visual development in the early years of life.

The most common causes of amblyopia are vision impairments (long-sightedness, astigmatism or short-sightedness), a squint or eye conditions.

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Amblyopia is the most common cause of childhood visual impairment, affecting 2-4% of children, and can become irreversible if not diagnosed in time for targeted treatments.

Indeed, amblyopia does not improve naturally and, if left untreated, can have a negative impact on the quality of life in adulthood. Furthermore, adults with amblyopia run the risk of visual impairment and blindness if the other eye becomes permanently damaged.

For this reason, eye screening at preschool age is very important.

## TREATMENT

First of all, diagnosis must be made by the age of 6, a period when the child’s visual system can still be altered and improved if treated properly.

The treatment of amblyopia varies according to the cause and the age at which the diagnosis is made. Glasses or “occlusion treatment” may be prescribed, involving patching of the dominant eye to help the eye with poorer vision, known as the “lazy eye”, to develop correctly.

## Reggio Emilia Local Health Authority ORTHOPTIC SCREENING

Reggio Emilia Local Health Authority orthoptic screening for the prevention and diagnosis of amblyopia **is offered free of charge to all children aged 4** living in the area. It is carried out by Local Health Authority orthoptists at preschools for those children attending preschool, or in surgeries for children who do not go to preschool, and those who are absent or do not cooperate at the time of the screening (surgeries are located in the six districts within the province, in Reggio Emilia, Castelnovo ne’ Monti, Correggio, Guastalla, Montecchio, and Scandiano).

The screening is free and non-invasive, and lasts around 10 minutes.

The screening comprises two levels:

### FIRST LEVEL

Screening test performed by an orthoptist at preschools in cooperation with teaching staff or in district surgeries for those children who do not go to preschool, and those who are absent or do not cooperate at the time of the screening.

### SECOND LEVEL

Examination carried out by an eye specialist following a positive result from the orthoptic screening.