

## Earlier Is Better

- School age screening may be too late.
- Amblyopia is difficult to treat after age 5. (AAPOS)
- Permanent vision loss occurs by age 7. (AAPOS)
- Children entering kindergarten with amblyopia are not prepared to learn.
- 80% of learning in the first years comes through vision.
- Undetected vision disorders can lead to developmental delays.
- Behavior problems may be undiagnosed vision problems.
- More than 11,000 preschool aged children in Oregon may have amblyopia.



The program screens throughout the state of Oregon in partnership with Head Starts and Oregon Elks Lodges.

## More Resources Available

Additional information and educational resources are available online. The Elks Preschool Vision Screening Program offers a list of eye doctors who accept OHP patients and are willing to provide comprehensive dilated eye exams for preschool children. Go to [www.ohsucosey.com/oregonelksvision](http://www.ohsucosey.com/oregonelksvision) or call **503 577-8785**.



## Oregon State Elks

Thanks to generous donations from the Oregon State Elks, the program provides vision screenings at Oregon Head Start preschools, libraries, and public health fairs across the state. Oregon Elks volunteers from local Elks lodges volunteer their time to assist with the screenings. Since 1949, the Oregon Elks have donated over 30 million dollars and countless hours of service to provide the gift of sight to thousands of Oregon's children.

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# Why Screen Preschool Children for Vision Problems?



**ELKS**  
preschool **VISION** screening  
**PROGRAM**



**Elks Children's Eye Clinic**  
at the Casey Eye Institute, OHSU  
3375 SW Terwilliger Blvd.  
Portland, Oregon 97239

## The Elks Children's Eye Clinic Preschool Vision Screening Program

Promoting and providing vision screenings for preschool aged children in Oregon.



### Why Perform Preschool Vision Screenings?

To detect preventable vision loss in children. Some vision disorders can be reversed if treated before age 5.

### Why Do Children Lose Vision?

Amblyopia is the number one reason why children lose vision.

### What Is Amblyopia?

\am-blē-`ō-pē-ə\

A central nervous system disorder that develops when the brain and the eye are not working together, amblyopia is usually caused by unequal focusing power, misaligned eyes, or blockage of vision.

### Amblyopia Affects 5% of Preschool Children

Only children can get amblyopia. It can develop in the first few years of life if one eye is not getting enough use. Amblyopia often goes undetected in children with straight eyes.

## What Causes Amblyopia?

### Unequal Focusing Power



Unequal focusing power is the most common cause of amblyopia but is difficult to detect. The child's vision will be blurred but their eyes will appear straight. Children with this condition who are not treated before age seven are likely to lose use of their weaker eye.

### Crossed Eyes



Strabismus, often referred to as crossed eyes, is a vision disorder where the eyes are not aligned in a similar direction. One or both eyes may be turned inwards, up, down, or outwards. The eyes will focus on different fields of view, causing confusion. If left untreated, the brain may learn to ignore the weaker eye in response to this confusion, resulting in amblyopia.

### Blocked Vision



Vision can be completely blocked by a cataract or droopy lid. The eye is prevented from developing because it sees no images. These conditions must be corrected, usually with surgery, as quickly as possible so amblyopia treatment can begin.



## Treating Amblyopia

Children who are referred after a vision screening need to be seen by an eye doctor to receive a full comprehensive dilated eye exam. Treating amblyopia involves strengthening the weaker eye. This can be done by patching the strong eye for several hours a day or by placing a drop in the better eye to blur vision, forcing the use of the weaker eye. Successful treatment of amblyopia depends on how early it is detected.



The program uses  
photo-screening  
technology.