



# Orthoptist/Orthoptics

## **What is a certified orthoptist?**

A certified orthoptist is an allied health professional uniquely trained to evaluate and manage childhood and adult eye movement abnormalities.

## **What is the training of an orthoptist?**

Orthoptists study 2 years in an accredited program after obtaining a baccalaureate degree. Certification requires passage of written and practical examinations administered by the American Orthoptic Council (AOC). Maintenance of AOC certification requires participation in continuing education activities.

## **Where does an orthoptist work?**

Orthoptists typically work with pediatric or neuro ophthalmologists and often participate in the education of orthoptic students, medical students and ophthalmology residents. Some orthoptists participate in clinical and/or basic research.

## **What testing/treatment does an orthoptist administer?**

Assessment includes determination of visual acuity level, focusing ability, binocular function and eye movements. After assessment, appropriate management regimens including amblyopia treatment, orthoptic exercises, optical devices and/or eye muscle surgery are suggested. Optical devices include lenses (with or without prism) and bifocal spectacles. Orthoptic home exercises are sometimes advised for reading problems secondary to convergence and focusing deficiencies (convergence insufficiency). Exercises do not treat learning disabilities.

## **Do orthoptists evaluate/manage patients independent of an ophthalmologist?**

Orthoptists evaluate and manage patients under the direction of an ophthalmologist. The ophthalmologist may not examine the patient at every visit.