



Pseudo strabismus

information for parents and guardians

What is a strabismus?

A strabismus, also referred to as a 'squint', is a misalignment of the eyes. The eyes can point in different directions ie. in, out, up or down. It is particularly common in children, affecting approximately 2-3% of children in the UK population.

Pseudo-strabismus vs true strabismus

Pseudo-strabismus is the appearance of an eye turning, when in fact the eyes are straight. A pseudo-squint is often noticed in photographs if your child's head is slightly turned, or if the photograph has been taken at an angle.

The image below shows an example of a pseudo-strabismus vs true strabismus. The small white dots in the image represents the corneal reflections (light reflections). With a pseudo-strabismus the corneal reflections will be in the same place in each eye, usually centre of the pupil and symmetrical. With a true strabismus, the corneal reflection will appear in a different location in each eye.



Pseudo squint



True Squint

What can cause the appearance of a pseudo-strabismus?

- Broad nasal bridge
- Epicanthic skin folds (prominent skin folds over the inner corner of the eyes)
- Heterochromia (difference in eye colour)
- Wide or narrow gap between the eyes
- Eye or eyelid shape.

Young children often have a broad flat bridge to their nose and/or epicanthic folds. Either of these can create the impression that the eyes are not aligned. The bridge of the nose or the epicanthic fold hides the corner of the eye creating the impression that the eye is turning in.

Does a pseudo-strabismus require treatment?

No treatment is required for a pseudo-strabismus. It is important that your child is assessed by the orthoptist to differentiate true and pseudo strabismus. The pseudo-strabismus should become less noticeable as your child grows and their facial features develop.

Can a strabismus develop?

A child diagnosed with pseudo-strabismus can still develop a strabismus. The visual system is continually developing during the first few years of life and a strabismus can develop in childhood and occasionally later in life.

Following discharge, if there are any new concerns or you continue to see a strabismus in your child; please contact your GP, health visitor or local optometrist to seek re-referral to an orthoptist.