

Dyspraxia

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination in children and adults.

Children may present with difficulties with self-care, writing, typing, riding a bike and play as well as other educational and recreational activities. It may also impact on time management, planning and personal organisation.



Anatomy of a Child with **DYSPRAXIA**

Things we can do...

- Provide an alternative means of recording work
- Break down tasks into smaller components.
- Directly teach organisational skills through making lists, sequencing events and using timetables
- Avoid giving more than one worksheet at a time and allow for the worksheet to be attached to the desk when a writing implement is being used (e.g. tape or clip paper to the desk, or use a non-slip mat under the copybook to stop it slipping)
- Fold worksheets in half and have the student come up to you when the first half is completed and allow the student a break before continuing with the work.
- Ensure homework tasks are understood and not too onerous.
- Limit copying from the white board and use highlighters to chunk information in texts.
- Be aware that growth spurts at particular phases of development may intensify problems for the pupil.
- Provide clear instructions and check that the pupil understands what is required of him/her.
- The pupil with DCD may find it difficult to multi-task (e.g. tie a shoelace and follow directions simultaneously). Consider this when giving directions/instructions.
- Use visual supports in implementing the curriculum.
- Consider using stopwatches or timers to develop an awareness of time.
- Give as many cues as possible. Use visual demonstration and verbal instructions to reinforce teaching.
- Place pupils at the front of the classroom so they can hear instructions clearly and copy from the board easily.
- Keep the environment as predictable as possible to allow pupils time to plan their actions and avoid anxiety.
- In Physical Education make participation and not competition the goal.
- Encourage a partner/buddy relationship with another pupil or other pupil.
- Provide praise and encouragement and reward effort as well as the final product.
- Thicker pencils, pencil grips or pencils with triangular barrels may be easier for the pupil to hold. Pencils with soft leads are also easier to move. Ask the pupil what he/she prefers to write with. For pupils with shaky hand movements or tremors use a heavy, weighted pencil.
- If a pupil presses too hard with the pencil allow him/her to practise writing with a towel under the page.
- If a pupil writes very lightly allow him/her to practise writing using carbon paper.
- Use grid paper to prompt pupils to leave a space between words.
- Allow the pupil to stop if he/she is tired.
- Encourage older pupils to do rough drafts in order to organise their work.
- To specifically develop hand skills allow the pupil to manipulate play dough, pop Bubble Wrap, squeeze clothes pegs, scrunch paper, squirt water pistols, wring out a wet sponge, stretch rubber bands, construct toys, rip up pieces of paper, etc.

<http://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about-dyspraxia/>