



DEVELOPMENTAL CO-ORDINATION DISORDER

DCD / Dyspraxia

DCD (dyspraxia) is a neurodevelopmental condition affecting how the brain plans and co-ordinates physical movement – both fine and gross motor – and is not explained by general ability. 'DCD' is the clinical term; 'dyspraxia' is widely used.

i Many people prefer 'dyspraxia' and describe themselves as **different, not disordered**. Co-ordination is the visible part – planning, sequencing and organisation are often the bigger day-to-day challenge.

👁 How it can present

- Appearing clumsy – bumping into things, trips and drops; balance and spatial awareness
- Fine-motor tasks – handwriting, buttons and laces, cutlery or scissors
- Gross-motor skills – running, catching, riding a bike, PE
- Learning movements others pick up automatically; carrying skills to new settings
- Organisation, planning and time-management
- Sometimes co-ordinating speech sounds (verbal dyspraxia)

✅ What helps – supportive approaches

- ✓ Occupational therapy and a task-focused, step-by-step approach
- ✓ Typing or assistive technology instead of handwriting; extra time
- ✓ Breaking activities into small, well-practised steps
- ✓ Organisational supports – checklists, visual timetables, equipment routines
- ✓ Multi-sensory teaching, repetition and encouragement
- ✓ Pencil grips and aids, plus regular physical activity to build confidence

📍 UK CONTEXT

~5%

Around 5% of school-aged children have DCD, with about 2% more severely affected. It is more commonly identified in boys (girls are often identified later).

Dyspraxia Foundation

★ Strengths often seen

- ★ Determination, resilience and persistence
- ★ Creative, original and strategic thinking
- ★ Strong problem-solving and finding 'work-arounds'
- ★ Big-picture thinking – seeing things differently
- ★ Empathy and genuine, direct communication

🕒 Finding assessment & support in the UK

- 1 Talk to your GP, health visitor or school SENCo
- 2 NHS referral to a paediatrician and/or paediatric occupational therapist
- 3 Diagnosis is usually made by an NHS paediatrician, often with an OT
- 4 School: SEN Support; request an EHC needs assessment / EHCP where needs are substantial
- 5 The Dyspraxia Foundation offers information and support

Please note – this sheet provides general information only. It is not a diagnostic tool and is not a substitute for individual assessment or professional advice. Every person is unique; if you have concerns about yourself or a child, please speak with a suitably qualified professional.

Sources & further information: NHS · Dyspraxia Foundation · Movement Matters UK · NICE