



# DYSCALCULIA– PARENTS GUIDE



## WHAT IS DYSCALCULIA?

Dyscalculia is a difficulty that is specifically linked to Maths.

Children with dyscalculia may struggle to identify number patterns and understanding the value of numbers i.e.  $23 = 20$  and 3. They may struggle with worded problems and understanding written calculations. They may also struggle to sequence events and information. When solving problems they may struggle to understand and remember the steps needed to find the correct answer.

## COMMON BEHAVIOURS THAT CAN BE SEEN IN CHILDREN WITH DYSCALCULIA

- Difficulty when counting backwards
- A poor sense of number and estimation
- Difficulty in remembering basic facts despite many hours of practice and rote learning
- The only strategy to compensate for lack of recall is to count in ones
- Difficulty in understanding place value
- No sense of whether an obtained answer is right or nearly right
- Slow to perform calculations
- Forgets mathematical procedures, especially when complex, for example, long division
- Addition is often the default operation
- Avoids tasks that are perceived or predicted as likely to result in a wrong answer
- Weak mental arithmetic skills
- High levels of mathematical anxiety

## WAYS DYSCALCULIA CAN AFFECT DAILY LIFE

People with Dyscalculia can struggle with the following areas of everyday life:

- Remembering phone numbers and pin numbers
- Telling the time
- Recognising the difference between £5.00 and £500.00
- Choosing the right coins to pay with
- Planning a journey and getting somewhere on time
- Telling if one thing is bigger than another
- Driving at the right speed
- Cooking and measuring quantities/known time needed for recipe

## WAYS TO SUPPORT

Show empathy – your child is struggling with an area which you may not understand or perceive as being “easy”. Be prepared to go over the same problem and discuss different ways of breaking the problem down to find one that makes sense to your child.

Plan regular, short focussed time to overlearn and practice things such as multiplication facts, addition, subtraction, number bonds. Keep session short so that your child doesn't become discouraged and want to give up.

Use concrete objects/drawing to help your child visualise the problem.

Try to look at lots of different ways to complete a task – i.e. when learning times tables use games, songs, written tasks, drawing calculations so that your child has a variety of strategies to use.

Remind your child that this difficulty does not define who they are. Acknowledge the difficulty and plan ways to overcome it but celebrate the things your child is good at. Remind your child that a difficulty in maths does not affect the kind of person they can be or the things they can achieve. Develop resilience when facing difficult things and talk about ways to overcome the things they find tricky.

Use lots of praise – particularly when they attempt something that they find hard or when they persevere with something tricky. Focus on the engagement rather than getting the right answer.

## OTHER RESOURCES

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyscalculia>

<https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/what-numeracy/what-dyscalculia>

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-dyscalculia>