



Dyspraxia – PARENTS GUIDE



WHAT IS Dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder) affects a person's motor (movement) abilities. Children with dyspraxia lack the fine and gross motor skills to cope with many everyday activities, like fastening clothes, handwriting, painting, PE.

Peers may see them as clumsy, and leave them out of their games. They will underestimate themselves, refuse to try new activities in case they fail, and may be disruptive in class. They need a lot of help and encouragement especially with their teamwork and organisational skills, and easy and loose clothing (Velcro fasteners, short socks, V-necks).

WAYS TO SUPPORT

Give step-by-step instructions

- When giving instructions, breaking them down into smaller chunks can be really helpful. You can also demonstrate each smaller task, gradually building up the sequence of actions to complete a whole task. Be patient during this process as the child might need you to demonstrate the task a few times before they can complete it.
- Make sure to give the child time to process and understand the information needed to complete the task.

Offer wellbeing support

- Children may struggle with social cues, interactions with peers and may distract others due to their low attention span. They may also feel different from their peers due to mobility and balance difficulties. This can have an impact on their overall wellbeing.
- It's important to regularly check in with children to see how they are feeling and support them in any way that you can.

Allow extra time to complete tasks

- The combination of difficulties with writing by hand and low concentration can make smaller tasks take longer for a child with dyspraxia, and that's okay! Give them plenty of time to complete the task or activity, or adapt them to be simpler. This is particularly important with homework tasks – consider chunking the task so that it can be done in small parts over several sessions.
- Remember a task that seems simple to you, may be difficult for your child. Be patient and prepared to model how to do the task several times before they are confident to do it by themselves.

Provide visual routines and reminders

- Part of a dyspraxia diagnosis can include organisational and working memory difficulties. Children may not be able to remember what's next in their routine and may benefit from visual timetables. This might be the morning routine and getting ready to go out or the bedtime routine. Pictures to remind children of each step might be useful so they can check back to see what they have to do rather than try to remember it all.

Practical tips for everyday life

Often the simplest and most straightforward ideas will make a difference to their quality of life. Try the following:

Clothing:

Lay out clothing layer by layer, underwear on top. Avoid tight neck-holes. Buy trousers with an elasticated waist – this saves fiddling with buttons and zips. Trousers that are pleated at the front make identifying 'the right way round' easier. Shirt collars one size larger than fits are easier to fasten. Baggy t-shirts and shorts are easy and comfy

Eating:

Use a flexible straw with a drink to prevent spilling. Don't fill cups too full. Use a damp towel under plates to stop them from moving or placemats that are made of a rubber material. Sit down to eat where possible.

Getting organised:

Keep to a daily routine. Use notes stuck at eye level on doors as useful reminders. When buying pencil cases and purses consider those that are transparent as this lets your child see the contents easily. Keep keys and purses on a long chain which clips to clothing to avoid them getting lost or misplaced.

OTHER RESOURCES

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/developmental-coordination-disorder-dyspraxia/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQhf23DJRU0>

<https://patient.info/childrens-health/dyspraxia-developmental-co-ordination-disorder>