

Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder

Condition:

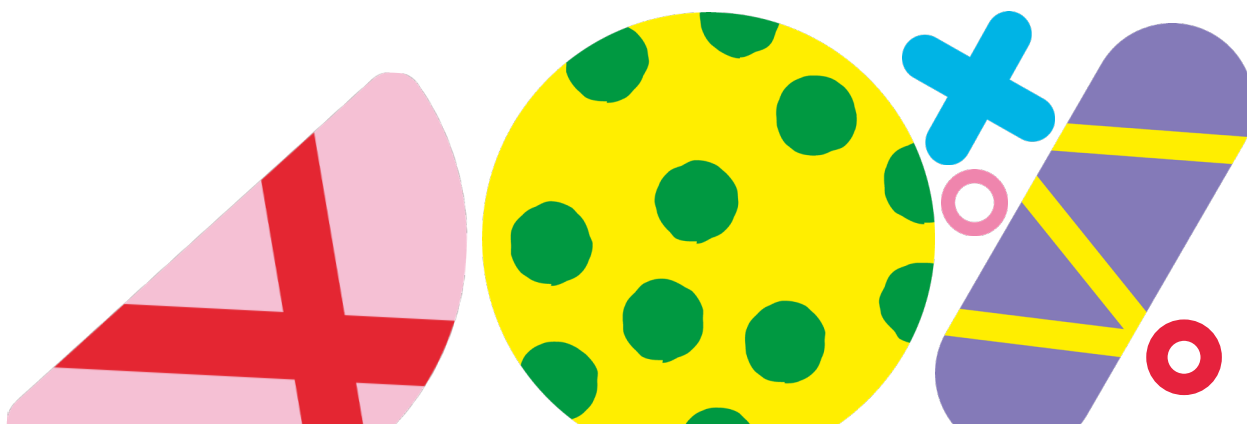
The Dyspraxia Foundation defines Dyspraxia as 'an impairment or immaturity of the organisation of movement' and, in many individuals, there may be associated problems with language, perception and thought. The term normally used is Developmental Dyspraxia or Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). The condition is thought to affect up to 10 percent of the population in varying degrees. It is probable that there is at least one Dyspraxic child in every group.

Problem Areas:

- Early recognition of Dyspraxia will enable early intervention and practical steps to help the child to achieve their potential. Children whose Dyspraxia is identified at an early stage are less likely to have problems with acceptance by their peers and with lowered self-esteem.
- Poor fine motor skills, so likely to struggle with using pens/pencils, cups etc. May also struggle with sports, kicking a ball, running, jumping etc.
- Generally poorly organised and can be unable to remember instructions.
- Easily distracted and need to be helped to learn. Can be well behind their peers in most areas of learning, including speech, reading and writing, but will improve if given one to one help.
- When children become teenagers their problems may change as social and organisational difficulties become more pressing.

Support strategies for your Group:

- Allow a child to visit the place where your group meets several times and give them a plan of its lay out. They can then study this at home to allow them to become familiar with it. Also invite the parents/carers: they may be able to identify problem areas that you may not have been aware of.
- Comparison can be disastrous. Never allow a child with Dyspraxia to be compared to another child. Not by leaders/helpers or peers.
- Praise every effort and every small accomplishment. A Dyspraxic child may have been





used to failure repeatedly: every effort must be made to raise their self-esteem. When they feel better about themselves, they are more likely to relax and learn.

- Do not put a child in a situation where they will constantly fail or be compared to others. Be sensitive about how you include a child in games for example, but also don't exclude a child from everything. It's about getting the balance right.
- Remember that they have difficulty in taking on board information during teaching times. Allow them extra time: if possible teach in small bursts, allowing opportunities to rest, if necessary. You will soon become aware when a child requires a rest. However, this will alter from day to day and from child to child.
- Ensure that a child has understood what is being taught, repeat if needed. Check that they are not falling behind because they cannot copy things down, for example. (Due to difficulties with repositioning gaze from one object to another)
- Teach on a one to one level if possible, with few distractions. If there is a one to one volunteer available, allow them to assist a child so they are taught at the same pace alongside their peers. Try to avoid removing a child from the teaching time as this stigmatises them, although in some circumstances this may prove unavoidable. Children with Dyspraxia work so much better in a relaxed environment with one to one support.

Further information:

Dyspraxia Foundation
Dyspraxic Teens Forum

www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk
www.dyspraxicteens.org.uk

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'Invited to Belong' has been developed in partnership between Urban Saints and Youthscape.



Youthscape

www.urbansaints.org/invitedtobelong