

## **Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia)**

Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia) refers to a specific learning difficulty associated with marked impairment in the development of motor co-ordination. It is recognised when:

1. The impairment significantly interferes with academic achievement or activities of daily living.
2. The difficulties are not associated with a medical condition, (e.g. cerebral palsy).
3. They are in excess of those normally associated with general learning difficulties.
4. They are not an acquired deficit but have been present from early infancy.

The presenting difficulties of D.C.D. are dependent upon age and development And D.C.D. often co-exists with other learning difficulties e.g. Dyslexia, A.D.H.D. and Autistic Spectrum Disorders .

### **Indicators of possible Developmental Co-ordination Disorder Difficulties:**

- Excessive movement, cannot sit still.
- Moves awkwardly – may bump into objects and fall over, finds it hard to pedal a bike.
- May not be able to run, hop, jump or kick a ball as well as their peers.
- Poor figure-ground awareness
- No sense of danger
- Poor fine motor skills – finds it hard to grip a pencil or use scissors, paintings are often very immature. Poor handwriting, drawing and copying skills.
- Messy eating – finds it hard to use a knife and fork.
- Slow at dressing.
- Is generally poorly organised.
- Unable to remember or follow instructions.
- Poor listening skills and concentration.
- Poor sense of time.
- Difficulty mixing with peers, few or no friends.
- Gets upset easily – very emotional.
- Immaturity.

### **Children with dyspraxia may benefit from:**

- Daily practice of a spelling/cursive handwriting programme.
- Tuition and modelling of good seated posture and handwriting behaviours.
- Provision of materials and equipment e.g. pencil grips, sloping boards, dycem sheets, coloured overlays, enlarged squared paper.
- Use of I.T. for drafting and proof reading.
- Social skills programme, learning and playtime “buddies”.
- Attention and listening skills.
- Adaptations to the classroom environment e.g. study carrel to minimise auditory and visual distractions.

- Encouraging extra-curricular activities e.g. swimming, trampolining, Cubs/Brownies.
- Top Start, Top Play, Top Sport programmes (Youth Sports Trust)
- Setting up 'Circles of Friends'.