

# DYSPRAXIA

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers



## What is dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia, or Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) as it is also known, is a condition that affects movement and physical co-ordination so a child seems clumsy when they perform some daily activities. Some children with dyspraxia may have other conditions, such as autism, ADHD, and/or dyslexia.

## Characteristics of dyspraxia

Dyspraxia mainly causes difficulties with co-ordination and physical movement; the planning, organisation and carrying out of movements in the right order. It can be diagnosed by professionals such as a paediatrician, occupational therapist (OT), physiotherapist or an educational psychologist. When your child is very young, you may notice that he or she takes slightly longer than peers to reach developmental milestones such as rolling over, sitting up, crawling and walking. As your child grows, you may also notice that he or she has difficulties in the following areas.

### Movement and co-ordination difficulties

- Your child has difficulties with motor skills such as hopping, skipping, jumping and running
- He or she may have poor hand-eye co-ordination, which means they may find activities such as catching a ball or riding a bike tricky
- He or she may have difficulties with fine motor skills such as holding a pencil, handwriting, cutting with scissors and using cutlery
- They may also find getting dressed, doing up zips and buttons and tying shoelaces difficult.

Although not all children with dyspraxia have issues in other areas, it can also cause difficulties with:

- concentration and memory
- organising and sequencing a set of instructions. this means your child may find it tricky to follow instructions, copy down information and organise their schoolwork
- clarity of speech, due to problems with co-ordinating movements to make speech sounds – this is known as verbal dyspraxia
- picking up new skills – your child may take longer to master it and may need more practice
- frustration and low self-esteem

## Types of treatment

Although there is not a 'cure' for dyspraxia, with help and treatment it has been found that many children find their condition easier to manage as they grow older. The types of help available for dyspraxia depend on how the condition affects your child. Some children will need help from a number of healthcare professionals. this may include:

- **Occupational Therapy (OT)** – they can help with daily living activities such as dressing, and with skills such as handwriting, either by suggesting adaptations such as pencil grips or a writing slope to help children maintain a good posture. As a child gets older, if handwriting remains an issue, it may be that the OT suggests that a laptop is used in school and that your child has extra time in exams.
- **Physiotherapy** – this can be useful if a child needs support with their posture and gross



## DYSPRAXIA



motor skills. The physiotherapist will do an assessment and devise a therapy plan to improve their skills.

- **Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)** – can be useful in helping children with producing speech sounds and in the movement of their tongue and lips to help with the clarity of their speech if this is an issue.

---

### Ask about

- **Amaze** – the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)** offers impartial, confidential advice on anything to do with special educational needs and disabilities for 0 to 25 year olds. Parents, carers, children and young people under 25 with SEND living in Brighton & Hove or East Sussex can use the service. Email [sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk](mailto:sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk), call **01273 772289** or visit our website at <https://amazesussex.org.uk>
- **Parenting Kids with Dyslexia/Dyspraxia/ADHD**  
This is a community of parents that hosts monthly social meetups to make new friends who understand how it can be to parent a child with similar challenges. They meet once a month in Brighton or Hove on the first Saturday of the month. [www.facebook.com/onewarriormum](http://www.facebook.com/onewarriormum)
- **Other parent support groups** – there are many parent led groups for children with disabilities in Brighton & Hove. Some are for all children with SEND and some for children with specific disabilities. You can find a list of local groups in Brighton & Hove at: [amazesussex.org.uk/parent-carers/info-advice-parent-carers/survival-strategies/parent-support-groups](http://amazesussex.org.uk/parent-carers/info-advice-parent-carers/survival-strategies/parent-support-groups)
- **Seaside View Child Development Centre** – this is where many children are diagnosed and where health professionals such as paediatricians and therapists work together to support and treat your child. Assessments will usually be via a health or education professional but you can contact Seaside View directly on: **01273 265780**.

---

### Further reading and useful links

- **Dyspraxia Foundation** – for information and resources go to [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk), tel: **01462 454986**, or fill in their online enquiry form.
- **Local Offer** – the local authority's online listing of all the services and support that are available to families with children with SEND in the area. Visit [new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities](http://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities)
- **Understood** – a website for learning and attention issues has a whole section on dyspraxia. For more, go to their website at: [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org) and search for 'dyspraxia'.

