

- Some children may prefer to use tripod grips on their pens/pencils and a sloped surface on which to write. As a whole class strategy, it may be useful to explore with all pupils their preferences. To provide a number of sloped surfaces and A4 files is a simple and cheap resource. Many children may find this helpful but it is important to bear in mind that some children with DCD may not.
- Encourage efficient organisational techniques. E.g. uncluttered desks, designated places for bags/books and use of notepads to jot down important things to remember.
- Encourage children not only to plan their work carefully but to review it, checking that they have achieved goals which are specific to them (perhaps recorded in their Individual Education Plan, e.g. are the words I have written evenly spaced? Do my letters sit on the line?)
- Focus on the purpose of the lesson, e.g. if a creative story is the goal, then ignore messy handwriting, uneven spacing and multiple erasures. If the goal is to have the child learn to set up a mathematical problem correctly, then allow time to do it even if the problem does not get solved.
- Facilitate different mediums children can use to record their work. E.g. audiotape, peer scribe, computer, digital photography, white board, 'magna-doodle' etc.
- Allow children with DCD preferential access to computers – feedback from computer programmes is immediate and therefore motivating.
- Allow children with DCD to take on a leadership role in gym activities (e.g. captain of the team, umpire). These activities may also help develop organisational or managerial skills.

Where can I get more information on DCD?

More information on DCD is available from a variety of sources such as those listed below. Teachers and parents will need to make their own judgements about the information and support available.

Books:

Author: Kate Ripley
 Inclusion for Children with Dyspraxia: DCD - A Handbook for Teachers
 Publisher: David Fulton Publishers
 ISBN: 1853467626

Author: Kate Ripley, Bob Daines and Jenny Barrett
 DYSPRAXIA: A Guide for Teachers and Parents
 Publisher: David Fulton Publishers
 ISBN: 1853464449

Author: Neralie Cocks
 Skipping Not Tripping: How to Help Children Whose Motor Skills Seem Clumsy and Uncoordinated
 Publisher: Simon & Schuster Australia
 ISBN: 0731803043
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Internet: www.ISR-DCD.org.uk

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 County Hall, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire,
 HP20 IUZ
 Tel: 01296 383219 Email: eps@buckscc.gov.uk

Council Offices, King George V Road,
 Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 5BY
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The EPS would like to thank Liz Weedon and Jo Hart, Physiotherapists, who joined members of the EPS team to produce this leaflet.

What is **Developmental Co-ordination Disorder?**





What is Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)?

Developmental Co-ordination Disorder occurs when there is a delay in the development of motor skills or difficulty co-ordinating movements and therefore results in a child finding it difficult to complete their activities of daily living. Children with DCD may also have associated difficulties such as problems with perception, language, eye movements, attention and behaviour.

What might you notice in a child with DCD?

A child with Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) may experience difficulties with both gross and fine motor skills including:

- Running, hopping, jumping, tying shoelaces and refining grips to pick up objects.

They may:

- Appear 'clumsy' or awkward in their movements. The child may often bump into things or knock things over.
- Find it difficult to complete activities that require using two sides of the body together, for example, swimming or dance.
- Find activities that require a change in direction and a great deal of body awareness difficult e.g. skipping, basketball or riding a bicycle.

- Have difficulties learning new movement patterns.
- Have a poor pencil grip and/or have difficulties with letter formation, placement of letters on the line and orientation of the page when drawing or writing.
- Not have developed a clear hand dominance and therefore not have established a clear lead and assist hand pattern when completing activities with both hands (e.g. using scissors or cutlery).

A child with DCD may also have difficulties with:

- Copying from the blackboard or worksheets with a large amount of information on them.
- Remaining still in their chair or on the floor.
- Paying attention and remaining focused on a task.
- Remembering verbal instructions.
- Organising themselves and their belongings.

The Role of the Physiotherapist

The role of the Physiotherapist is to assess muscle strength, balance and co-ordination. They look at larger movements such as running, jumping, throwing and catching.

The Role of the Occupational Therapist (OT)

OTs assess and advise on fine and gross motor skills, sensory skills, self care and organisational skills. Once the child's needs and strengths are identified, a variety of approaches may be used, such as: individual and/or group activity programmes, as well as strategies which may help at home and at school.

The Role of the Educational Psychologist (EP)

Educational Psychologists work collaboratively with schools, parents and therapists to investigate how the child's difficulties impinge on his/her learning and how the learning environment and teaching approach can be adapted to facilitate the child's learning. Underpinning their assessments is identification of social, emotional and behavioural implications.

How can I empower the child in school?

In order to promote an inclusive and empowering environment, the following strategies may be useful for a number of children including those with DCD. Exploration of these strategies at a whole school/class level can help individuals with DCD feel fully included and not singled out.

- It may be useful to look at the layout of classrooms, considering ease of movement and organisation of resources for all pupils. A useful starting point for this may be the Environment Checklist located in the Buckinghamshire SEN Guidelines file. Within secondary provision, it may also be useful to discuss with pupils how they feel about moving from one classroom to the next, using their timetable as a starting point for discussion. Strategies for individual children may be explored e.g. a child with DCD may benefit from sitting near the front of the class, near the teacher and facing the whiteboard.
- Discuss with the whole class strategies, which may be useful to ensure they are positioned correctly to work effectively at their desk/table. e.g. ensure feet are supported, (i.e. either on the floor or on a small stool/block for smaller children), that chairs and tables are matched by height and that forearms are comfortably on the desk.