

# CHILDREN'S NEURODEVELOPMENTAL NEWSLETTER (PARENT & CARER EDITION)

## Drop-in sessions in schools.

It has been lovely for the team to meet some of you at the recent drop in events in schools.

You can contact the team on 0151 514 0219 if you need any advice or support.

MAY 2024

### FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENTAL CO-ORDINATION DISORDER (DCD/DYSPRAXIA)

Developmental Co-ordination disorder is frequently overlooked. Most people understand that the condition affects fine and gross motor skills, but they do not know about the additional traits.

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*Developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a condition affecting physical co-ordination. It causes a child to perform less well than expected in daily activities for their age and appear to move clumsily. NHS 2024*

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### Movement and Co-ordination.

Children may have difficulty with:

- Playground activities such as hopping, jumping, running, and catching or kicking a ball.
- They often avoid joining in because of their lack of co-ordination and may find physical education difficult.
- Walking up and down stairs.
- Writing, drawing, and using scissors – their handwriting and drawings may appear scribbled and less developed compared to other children their age.
- Getting dressed, doing up buttons and tying shoelaces.



- Keeping still – they may swing or move their arms and legs a lot.

A child with DCD may appear awkward and clumsy as they may bump into objects, drop things, and fall over a lot.

## Additional problems

As well as difficulties related to movement and co-ordination, children with DCD can also have other problems such as:

- Difficulty concentrating – they may have a poor attention span and find it difficult to focus on 1 thing for more than a few minutes.
- Difficulty following instructions and copying information – they may do better at school in a 1-to-1 situation than in a group, so they can be guided through work.
- Being poor at organising themselves and getting things done.
- Being slow to pick up new skills – they need encouragement and repetition to help them learn.
- Difficulty making friends – they may avoid taking part in team games and may be bullied for being "different" or clumsy.
- Behaviour problems – often stemming from a child's frustration with their symptoms.
- Low self-esteem.

If you suspect DCD, fill in an ABC form and see if the criteria is met. We can assess for DCD between the ages of 5 years and 12 years.

## Looking ahead for our Neurodiverse young people:

Here are a few things to consider over the next few weeks for our Neurodiverse young people.

**Exams:** Exams are stressful for everyone. But our Neurodiverse might need a bit more preparation. Do they need to have pictures or be shown where they will sit the exam before the sit them? Do they need support with organisation? Is there a visual tool that can be used to help keep them on task? What tools have you taught them to break a task down? Teaching them to highlight key words or phrases before answering the questions might help.

**Change:** As exciting as the summer term is for most, it can also bring a lot of anxiety. Children due to experience a big transition, may already be worrying about it. This can impact on behaviour and well-being. Neurodiverse children might need a longer, gentler transition to the juniors, high school or sixth form. Can they start to look at pictures. Have they seen any new uniforms yet? These small opportunities to help them prepare can make for the best transition.

Spring/Summer: Not all children enjoy the extra smells and sounds that Spring/Summer brings. More people tend to go out so public spaces are noisier and more crowded. This can be overwhelming for someone who struggles with sensory needs. New smells appear this time of year that they may struggle with. Even subtle smells such as cut grass or sun cream can be difficult to cope with if you have sensory needs. Allow the young



person to tell you in some way if things are overwhelming. This could be a help card or a visual hand sign. The child should be allowed to remove themselves for situations that cause great discomfort.

## Useful Links and resources

- Oxford NHS Occupational Therapy have a useful website that contains lots of resources to support DCD. Click the link below for details.

[Developmental Coordination Disorder \(DCD\) - Children's Integrated Therapies \(oxfordhealth.nhs.uk\)](https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/developmental-coordination-disorder-dcd-childrens-integrated-therapies)

- **ADHD and Burnout** - [School burnout in kids who learn and think differently \(understood.org\)](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-differences/adhd/burnout)
- **Transitioning to a new school** - [starting or switching school \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk/0-5years/starting-switching-school)
- **Leaving School** - [leaving school \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk/5-16years/leaving-school)
- **Starting University or college** - [starting college or university \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk/16-25years/starting-college-or-university)
- **Leaving university or college** - [leaving college or university \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk/25-64years/leaving-college-or-university)
- **SENDLO (Wirral's Local Offer)** <https://www.sendlowirral.co.uk/>

Thank you for all your support from the 0-19 Children's Neurodevelopmental Team.

