

What can we do while we wait ?



It can be extremely frustrating and worrying when you consult a doctor or health professional about your child and gain a diagnosis only to find that there is an enormous waiting list to see relevant therapists.

That wait can be agonising.

However, there are lots of things you can do to help children with their movement and coordination.

Activities such as swimming, pony riding and martial arts are great for co-ordination and so it is worth considering one of these pastimes.

The following ideas are things you can do which will help particular areas of development and strengthen muscle groups which are often weaker in those with dyspraxia/DCD.

Remember though for little children you must get that **'just right challenge'**. Too easy and they are bored, too difficult and they give up.

Remember that you must take care of yourself too. Don't take on any additional pressure/exercise unless you are fit to do so and have time.

Most importantly, any activity should be fun!!

If any of this becomes confrontational stop immediately, your child may be too tired or simply not in the mood.

Shoulder/Arm Exercises.

Maximum of 10 repetitions.

- Swing both arms in circles.
- Mexican wave – swing arms up in front into the air.
- Paint the outside walls of your house with water.
- Drawing on an easel.
- Pat a cake games.

- Throwing large beach balls forwards with both hands and then behind.
- Spooning objects from one container to another.
- Bear walking (walk on hands and feet).
- Hanging out the washing (you could put a line up in your child's room and ask them to hang up the clothes for the next day in order).
- Magnetic fishing game.
- Swing arms holding a book or beanbag.
- Crawling on hands and knees.
- Throw headscarves up in the air and catch them.
- Box press ups – in the crawling position, bring nose down to floor keeping it in line with your hands and push up again to straighten the elbows.

Eye Hand Co-Ordination Activities

- Throw and catch a beanbag (to each other.) Also allow the child to throw it up and catch it with his/her dominant hand.
- Bounce and catch a ball. (A large, soft one may bring more success.) Stick to ten repetitions to begin with. (When bouncing a ball to a person use a hoop or a piece of paper midway between the two people for the child to aim at). Use both hands and also just the dominant hand.
- Throw beanbags, rolled up socks, quoits, sponges etc. into a box or bin. Start with a large bin and decrease the size with success.
- Throw and catch a large ball. (If your child finds this too difficult, slow the process down by using a balloon or a beach ball.) Once this becomes easier use smaller balls and also with just the dominant hand.
- Skittles.
- Catch bubbles in the air.
- Batting a balloon either with your hand or a bat.
- Fishing games.
- Aiming games such as Velcro or magnetic darts, basketball.
- Bat a balloon to each other. As skill improves try a 'koosh' ball.



Pelvis/leg exercises.

- Kicking a ball to each other or against a wall.
- Dribble a ball around an obstacle course.
- Holding hands with someone - stand up from crouching.
- Sitting on an imaginary chair with back to the wall.
- Standing on one leg, lifting the other knee up high.
- Jumping forwards and backwards with both feet together.
- Trampolining (not for those who are hypermobile). Please use a safety net.
- Jumping over a line with both feet together.
- Hopping.
- Skipping.
- Bridging. (Lie on your back on the floor, knees bent up and feet on the floor and lift your bottom clear of the floor.)
- Walking up and down stairs up to 10 times.
- Stand ups (from sitting on a chair, stand up and then sit down again) up to 10 times.
- Walk on cushions or a sandy beach.
- Stand on an air cushion and throw bean bags to another person or into a box.
- Walk on knees forwards, backwards and sideways slowly.
- Step into and out of boxes.
- Use a wobble board.



Finger (co - ordination) Exercises.

- Pick up cotton wool balls with tweezers.
- Pick up matches or cocktail sticks one by one.
- Cut out shapes with scissors (whole hand scissors) regular scissors may be too



difficult.

- Stand up/knock down dominoes.
- Roll out plasticine/play dough into the thinnest possible sausage.
- Thread a lace in and out of card.
- Thread beads.
- Tracing.
- Dot to Dot pictures.
- Sorting objects. (E.g. a pile of matches, beads, paper clips).
- Copy shapes with a pencil.
- Play with finger puppets.
- Appropriate nursery rhymes (e.g. Peter Pointer, One, two three, four five...)
- Spraying the house plants with a plant sprayer. (They are also fun in the bath!)
- Scrunch up small pieces of newspaper and flick.
- Drawing around stencils

For speech and language difficulties.

Give instructions clearly and simply. Be prepared to repeat and re phrase.

Blow and suck through different pipes, tubes, straws etc. Use the twirly straws at break



times.

Make funny faces in a mirror.

Stick your tongue out.

Licking games, lollies, cooking spoons, jam off lips.

Blow bubbles, blow paints, blow recorders, whistles etc.

Singing.

Use different voices in role play games.

Breath control. Holding notes, using a blow pipe and ball.

These are just some of many ideas that will help to strengthen common areas of weakness in children with dyspraxia/DCD. Incorporate as many as you can into your daily routine as there is often a great deal to do when children come in (often exhausted) from school. Remember that a walk, a swim, sorting washing, rolling pastry, visiting the seaside, kicking a ball in the garden, peeling vegetables, and many other routine activities are all therapeutic .

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