

Elaine tells us about her twin 'boys'...

I have twin sons (now aged 31) who both have Dyspraxia. They were first diagnosed aged 4 when they had their health check at school by the school Doctor and she asked them to run and to kick a ball. We were told they had a condition called Dyspraxia, which we had never heard of. All we were told was that it was poor co-ordination i.e. they wouldn't be the next David Beckham. She referred them to physiotherapy to help with their leg muscles.

At that time (27 years ago) there was no Internet and we couldn't find any books on the subject so we had no idea there were other problems associated with it. As far as we knew they had difficulty with physical activity and that was that!

It was difficult for us because as they were identical twins (we don't have any other children) the fact that neither of them could tie their shoelaces, they were both very sensitive to noise, they had little sense of speed or distance, their handwriting was poor etc. we didn't put those problems down to dyspraxia. They were extremely bright and both were reading at 3 years old.

As the years went by we slowly began to learn a little more about dyspraxia but still not to any great extent. We had to explain it to every teacher as none of them had heard of it! The boys both did well and were able to go to University to study what they both loved – Computers.

It wasn't until they went to University and an Educational Psychologist assessed them both over a 2-day period that we began to understand **exactly** what dyspraxia involved. It was a light bulb moment and to some extent a great relief as we now knew the reasons for their difficulties. They were also both diagnosed with dyslexia.



I think over the years they developed their own coping strategies and we encouraged them to focus on their strengths, which for both of them was in IT. They both gained degrees in IT and now both work in IT, (I guess it's a twin thing that they have the same interests!). Adam is also part way through a Master's degree. Jamie got married in August of this year, which was just wonderful.

We are immensely proud of them as it has not always been easy, and there have been times when we have had to step in on their behalf to ensure teachers, work colleagues and employers understand dyspraxia.

My sons cope brilliantly and they try not to let the condition affect their lives. They are always positive and both have a great sense of humour. They have fantastic friends and family who are very supportive. Any problems that arise are usually due to a lack of awareness and understanding of others.

We need to ensure dyspraxia does not mask an individual's true potential. Therefore help and support at home, in the classroom and in the workplace is essential.

My sons have achieved so much and when you understand how the difficulties of dyspraxia can affect participation and functioning in everyday life, you realise how much harder they have to work for their successes.

Along with my husband I run a support group here in Cumbria. I still sometimes have to consult a couple of experts for advice, however I am very lucky as those experts are my sons and let's face it who is better qualified than them to educate us about dyspraxia!