

## For adults

Problems experienced in childhood often continue into adulthood and others can become more important. Adults who think they may have dyspraxia should contact their GP who may refer on to a clinical psychologist, neurologist, physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Further information and support for adults is available on [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk) or by contacting the helpline 01462 454986.

## What about the future?

Dyspraxia cannot be cured, but if it is identified and appropriate help and support is provided, people with dyspraxia can be very successful in their lives. Therapy and educational interventions will help people develop skills for learning and living, while advice and strategies will minimise the impact of difficulties on day-to-day activities and promote well-being.

## What does the Dyspraxia Foundation do?

The Dyspraxia Foundation is the only national charity for people with dyspraxia, their families and the professionals who support them. Founded in 1987 as The Dyspraxia Trust, the charity has been consistently campaigning for improvement in services and support for people with dyspraxia/DCD of all ages. Despite its small size and limited resources, Dyspraxia Foundation is recognised by the NHS, education and employers as a trusted source of information and support.

**The Dyspraxia Foundation's vision** is a world in which dyspraxia/DCD is understood and accepted and where dyspraxia/DCD is not a barrier to opportunity and fulfilment.

**Our Mission Statement** is to enable all children, young people and adults with dyspraxia/DCD to reach their full potential at every stage in life.

**Our values:** Sustainable; Collaborative; Compassionate; Enabling; Inclusive; Accountable.

## Our objectives are to:

- Ensure people with dyspraxia, their families and those who work with them have access to high quality advice and emotional support.
- Raise awareness of dyspraxia and its impact across the lifespan.
- Represent the voice of people with dyspraxia and their families so that their needs are understood and provided for.
- Lobby for accessible evidence-based assessment, intervention and support services for people with dyspraxia of all ages.

The The Dyspraxia Foundation provides information and support for people with dyspraxia and those who live or work with them through a telephone helpline and email enquiry service, website, social media, leaflets and information sheets. We also support a national network of local groups run by volunteers (including groups for adults with dyspraxia) and a closed Facebook Group for young people with dyspraxia aged 13-25 years.

We raise awareness of dyspraxia by hosting conferences, events and webinars, holding an annual Awareness Week campaign, briefing policy makers and by responding to government enquiries on issues of concern to people with dyspraxia.

The Dyspraxia Foundation promotes better understanding of dyspraxia by supporting research, publishing a peer-reviewed Professional Journal and by running conferences for professionals working in health, education and employment.

## To find out more see:

- [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)
- Facebook: /dyspraxiafoundation
- Dyspraxia Youth Facebook group
- Twitter: /DYSPRAXIAFDTN

## Membership

Become a member to support the work of the Dyspraxia Foundation and to ensure a better future for people affected by dyspraxia. Benefits of membership include:

- The opportunity to join a local group
- Monthly Dyspraxia News e-newsletters
- Professional Journal (for professional members)
- Access to a members-only area of the website that includes extra information sheets, resources, videos and handouts from previous conferences
- Reduced rates for conferences and events
- Exclusive member discounts

Helpline Service: 01462 454 986, 9-1 Mon-Fri  
Email: [dyspraxia@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](mailto:dyspraxia@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)  
Web: [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)  
General Enquiries: [info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)

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ORGANISATION  
LIFE  
LONG  
HIDDEN  
DYSPRAXIA  
EXPLAINED  
1 IN  
30  
DISABILITY  
COORDINATION  
PLANNING  
MOVEMENT

Kindly supported by:



“Everyone says I’m stupid but I know I’m not. I wish someone could understand what it’s like to be me. I feel so fed up and lonely. Eight year old girl with dyspraxia.

“It’s not so much the things you can’t do that are the problem, but how much harder it is to do things and how much more that takes out of you. It’s physically exhausting sometimes. Adult dyspraxic.

**Dyspraxia is surprisingly common in children and adults. It is a hidden condition which is still poorly understood.**

**The Dyspraxia Foundation is committed to raising awareness of dyspraxia and supporting people with the condition and those who live or work with them.**

### **What is dyspraxia?**

Dyspraxia, also known as developmental coordination disorder (DCD), is a common disorder affecting movement and coordination in children and adults. Difficulties are usually evident from an early age and make it difficult for people to carry out everyday activities that others manage easily. **Each person experiences dyspraxia differently** and how it affects an individual varies according to their age, life experience, environmental demands and the support given.

### **Problems include:**

#### **Movement**

Large and small body movements appear awkward and laboured. Poor body/spatial awareness means more trips, bumps and bruises. Physical skills are difficult to master, retain and generalise.

#### **Organisation and planning**

People with dyspraxia can have difficulty organising their thoughts, body and equipment. There may be problems with attention, memory and time management.

#### **Speech and language**

Some people with dyspraxia have difficulty keeping up with conversations and there may be long, awkward pauses before they respond to a question or comment. The term verbal dyspraxia is used to describe a severe and persistent difficulty coordinating the precise movements required to produce clear speech; verbal dyspraxia can occur in isolation or alongside general motor dyspraxia.

**Dyspraxia affects around 5% of school-aged children, 2% severely. Difficulties continue into adolescence and adulthood in most cases. Males are more likely to be affected than females and the condition may run in families.**

Early recognition means that a person’s academic, social and emotional needs can be identified early and action taken to enable each individual to reach their potential.

### **What causes dyspraxia?**

Physical coordination difficulties can occur for many reasons and in most cases the cause of dyspraxia is unknown. It’s likely that there isn’t one single factor to explain why a person’s motor skills are not as well developed as their abilities in other areas. While dyspraxia often occurs alongside other neurodevelopmental disorders, it is a unique and separate condition.

### **How would I recognise a child with dyspraxia?**

The presence of many (although not all) of these signs might suggest that a child has dyspraxia:

- Late to reach motor milestones e.g. sitting, crawling, walking, speaking.
- Difficulty running, jumping, hopping, catching and throwing a ball compared to their peers.
- Slow and hesitant in most actions.
- Doesn’t learn things instinctively and needs to be taught physical skills.
- Trips and falls frequently.
- Poor pencil grip. Writing is laborious and immature.
- Difficulty getting dressed and using cutlery.
- Poor understanding of spatial concepts such as in, on, in front of.
- Difficulty keeping friends and judging how to behave in company.
- Often anxious with a low self-esteem.
- Poor attention span and reacts to all stimuli without discrimination.
- Performs better when working one-to-one or in a small group.
- Difficulty following instructions.
- Poorly organised and often loses things.

### **How would I recognise an adult with dyspraxia?**

The presence of many (although not all) of these signs might suggest that an adult has dyspraxia:

- History of physical awkwardness as a child but may have developed coping or avoidance strategies as an adult.
- Difficulty learning new motor skills or applying skills in a different or busy environment.
- Difficulty handling tools and equipment such as a tin opener.
- Poor balance and tires easily.
- Can manage quality or quantity when handwriting, but not both.
- Anxious and may avoid social situations where difficulties might be exposed.
- Poor organisational and time management skills.
- Awkward pauses before answering questions.
- Misses deadlines, late for appointments.
- Underachieves academically, economically and in the workplace.

### **Where can I go for help?**

A range of information for parents, professionals and people with dyspraxia can be found on the Dyspraxia Foundation website [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk) The Dyspraxia Foundation also operates a helpline service for parents, professionals and people with dyspraxia: call 01462 454986 or send an email via the website. Information and support is also provided by the Dyspraxia Foundation via social media.

### **For pre-school children**

Dyspraxia is not usually diagnosed in children under 5 years of age, although those with speech/language difficulties may be identified sooner. Parents who are concerned about their child’s development should talk to their GP or health visitor who may refer them to a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist or paediatrician for further assessment.

### **For school-aged children**

Parents/carers should talk to their child’s GP, school nurse or school SENCO who may refer to an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech and language therapist, paediatrician or another health professional for further assessment. Hospital referrals may be required for tests to rule out other conditions. Intervention by an occupational therapist, physiotherapist and/or speech and language therapist may be recommended.