

# Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia is not an official diagnosis; rather, it is a group of movement disorders that will often include other symptoms such as poor social skills or inattention. Often children may also be labelled with DCD (developmental coordination disorder).

Dyspraxia is a specific problem with movement and includes challenges with:

- fine motor skills
- gross motor skills
- movement (motor planning) and completion
- coordination
- speech

A student with dyspraxia will often have difficulties with everyday life skills such as self-care, writing, typing, riding a bike, and playing. As dyspraxia is a lifelong condition, it will also affect 'adult' skills such as learning to drive a car and working on computers.

Dyspraxia often also affects students socially because it can lead to difficulty with time management, organization, memory, and processing. This can be misconstrued as the student having poor social and emotional skills when in reality they have no intellectual challenges; they simply need more time to respond and problem solve.

## TYPES OF DYSPRAXIA

- **Motor dyspraxia:** difficulty in planning, sequencing, and executing a correct movement pattern
- **Verbal dyspraxia:** difficulty in programming, sequencing, and starting the mouth movements required to make sounds
- **Oral dyspraxia:** difficulty with planning and executing non-speech sounds, such as blowing, sucking, or individual tongue/lip movements

## COMMON ISSUES WITH DYSPRAXIA

- Students are often mislabeled as 'slow', and they will tend to respond slower to instructions than their peers even though they are intellectually able.
- Students often avoid sports or team games due to being uncoordinated and clumsy.

- Completing work in a neat and organized manner is challenging. Often handwriting will be hard to read or students will take an extremely long time to write. Getting things like the date, title, and layout copied correctly from a board is hard.
- Students may have difficulties eating and playing with others without being 'messy'.
- Students may experience poor attention spans and difficulty concentrating on a task.

## HOW WE SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH DYSPRAXIA

- ✓ Constant multisensory teaching to practice fine and gross motor skills
- ✓ Developing checklists/visual prompts for the student to refer to in class
- ✓ Establishing good routines to allow students to self-advocate e.g. do they need wider lined paper, colour paper, graph paper?
- ✓ Introducing students to assistive technology programs such as Text-to-Speech and mod math
- ✓ Pre-teaching, role-playing and rehearsing anticipated classroom challenges and social situations
- ✓ Developing executive functioning procedures and being taught ways of carrying out activities they find difficult, such as breaking down difficult movements into much smaller parts

**"I daydream a lot! I do wonky writing when I don't have any lines on the paper. I love art although my lines are wonky. I get frustrated with my work if its hard and I dislike being asked lots of fast questions but I love to sing"**

- Grace

