

DEVELOPMENTAL COORDINATION DISORDER

Difficulty Learning New Motor Skills

WHAT YOU MAY NOTICE

- ☐ Takes longer to learn how to ride a bike
- ☐ Struggles with sports and playground games
- ☐ Needs repeated demonstrations
- ☐ Requires more practice than peers
- ☹ Frustration when learning new movements

WHY IS IT HARD?

- ☐ Motor Planning
- ☐ Coordination
- ☐ Visual-Motor Integration
- ⚖ Postural Control
- ☐ Motor Learning

LEARNING TAKES PRACTICE



Children with DCD can learn new skills—they often need more repetition, support, and encouragement.

Please visit our Youtube channel @stepstosuccessot4870 for video

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- ☐ Break skills into smaller steps
- ☐ Teach one step at a time
- ☐ Use visual demonstrations
- ☐ Practice regularly
- ☐ Allow extra time
- ☐ Reduce distractions
- ☐ Encourage effort
- ☐ Celebrate small successes

ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHT

Learning to Throw at a Target

- Goal: Learn a new motor skill
- Materials: Beanbag and bucket
- 1. Stand facing the target
- 2. Hold the beanbag
- 3. Reach arm back
- 4. Look at the target
- 5. Throw the beanbag
- 6. Repeat several times

Targets:

- Motor Learning
- Motor Planning
- Visual-Motor Integration
- Coordination
- Confidence

References

- CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research. Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD).
- American Occupational Therapy Association. Occupational Therapy Practice Guidelines for Children and Youth Ages 5–21 Years.
- Blank, R., et al. (2019). International Clinical Practice Recommendations for Developmental Coordination Disorder.

MOTOR PLANNING

CHILDREN WITH DCD OFTEN FIND IT DIFFICULT TO WORK OUT THE SEQUENCE OF MOVEMENTS NEEDED FOR A NEW SKILL. THEIR BRAIN HAS TO THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT EVERY STEP INSTEAD OF THE MOVEMENT HAPPENING AUTOMATICALLY.

YOU MAY NOTICE:

THEY ASK, "WHAT DO I DO NEXT?"

THEY SEEM CONFUSED WHEN LEARNING A NEW GAME.

THEY IMPROVE ONE DAY BUT FORGET THE NEXT.

COORDINATION

DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BODY NEED TO WORK TOGETHER SMOOTHLY. CHILDREN WITH DCD OFTEN STRUGGLE TO COORDINATE THEIR ARMS, LEGS, EYES AND BODY AT THE SAME TIME.

YOU MAY NOTICE:

DIFFICULTY CATCHING OR THROWING.

AWKWARD RUNNING OR JUMPING.

TROUBLE USING BOTH HANDS TOGETHER.

VISUAL-MOTOR INTEGRATION

THE BRAIN HAS TO COMBINE WHAT THE EYES SEE WITH HOW THE BODY MOVES. THIS PROCESS CAN BE SLOWER OR LESS ACCURATE.

YOU MAY NOTICE:

MISSING THE BALL.

DIFFICULTY AIMING.

BUMPING INTO OBJECTS.

STRUGGLING TO JUDGE DISTANCES.

POSTURAL CONTROL

STRONG CORE MUSCLES AND BALANCE HELP CHILDREN MOVE EFFICIENTLY. POOR POSTURAL CONTROL MEANS THEY HAVE TO WORK HARDER JUST TO STAY STABLE.

YOU MAY NOTICE:

POOR BALANCE.

TIRES EASILY DURING PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES.

SLOUCHES WHEN SITTING.

FALLS MORE OFTEN THAN EXPECTED.

MOTOR LEARNING

CHILDREN WITH DCD OFTEN NEED MANY MORE REPETITIONS BEFORE A MOVEMENT BECOMES AUTOMATIC. THEY MAY SEEM TO "RELEARN" SKILLS EACH TIME.

YOU MAY NOTICE:

SKILLS DON'T SEEM TO STICK.

PROGRESS IS SLOWER THAN EXPECTED.

THEY NEED REMINDERS FOR MOVEMENTS THEY HAVE PRACTISED BEFORE.

What you can do at home

BREAK SKILLS INTO SMALL STEPS

1. Teach one part of the movement at a time rather than expecting the whole skill at once
2. Example: instead of teaching the whole bike ride, practice balancing, then steering, then pedalling

DEMONSTRATE OFTEN

1. Show your child exactly what to do and let them watch several times before trying
2. Children with DCD often learn better by seeing the movement than by hearing long explanations

REDUCE DISTRACTIONS

1. Practice in a quiet space before introducing busy playgrounds or team sports
2. Learning a new skill is easier when children don't have to divide their attention.