

Talking Dyspraxia With Your Child



Please take a look at the link below for a definition of dyspraxia/DCD written specifically with children in mind

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2018/08/DyspraxiaFoundation-ChildFriendlyDefinitionOfDyspraxia.pdf>

Younger Children

Depending on the age of the child and their level of understanding, these factors will determine the best way to go about raising with the child about their dyspraxia or the possibility of having dyspraxia.

Firstly, it is always a good starting point to consider when and where you are when discussing this with your child. Ensuring you have enough time to fully chat with your child and enough time to answer any potential questions they may have.

Somewhere quiet and where the child feels safe is also very important so if they do become upset they are in familiar safe place for comfort if needed.

We would always strive for honesty when discussing the subject with your child but with obvious care to the level of comprehension of the child in question.

A good starting point is to raise with your child the reasons why you are at the point of obtaining a diagnosis, so if it is that your child's handwriting has become an issue at school or their ability to perform gross motor tasks, or the problems they may be having with planning and organisation, giving a specific example may make it easier for the child/young person to understand. However, it may be the case that your child is unaware or not yet noticed, so how you put this to your child will need very careful consideration.

If you start the conversation that way, then you can go on to suggest to the child that there might well be a reason for it and therefore you would like to get a few things checked out so that the right help and support can be put in place for them.

Your child may find this difficult to understand as you cannot see dyspraxia, so using an example of someone who wears glasses to help with being able to see better may be helpful in their understanding, but explain some things are hidden or invisible.

In every area the process for obtaining a diagnosis will be different, but by being aware of some of the professional's job titles and what they would be focusing on may be helpful.

It is important to say that if your child is diagnosed, that this is a lifelong condition and one that cannot be cured, but there are things that can be done to help and the school with the diagnosis, will also be able to put in support measures.

For many young people, the feeling of wanting to be accepted and no different from their peers is a very big deal at this age. For some, just to know a few famous people who have dyspraxia is reassuring. Perhaps the most famous is Daniel Radcliffe!

Here at the Dyspraxia Foundation we have a number of ways young people with dyspraxia can connect with others please take a look at our website for information on all we offer or contact us at info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk and if your child is between 13 and 25 and have their own Facebook profile then please let them know of our Closed Dyspraxia Youth group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DyspraxiaFoundationYouth/>

Older children/teens/young adults

Often a more difficult time for relationships with your child, communication can at times be strained and a sit down chat may just be a bit too formal at this age. It may be an option to have some leaflets available for your son/daughter to look through in their own time and/or in this more digital age the website links and few online resources. However, if your child is receptive looking through the Dyspraxia Foundations website and the list that explains what areas dyspraxia can affect. You may wish to go through this at various stages with your child as their understanding develops.

It is important to not rush your child in reading through these or expect them to want to talk straight away - Each child will be individual in the time it will take to absorb the information. Many do choose to ignore it and for some, years go by without them acknowledging it.

Talking to your child about things as and when particular difficulties arise might be helpful too in terms of helping them to absorb information as particular examples can make it easier to understand.

However, if it is affecting school or work life it is important for them to know their rights for extra support. More information on this can be found by contacting our Helpline <https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/helpline/>

A great resource is a book called Caged in Chaos by Victoria Biggs. She wrote the book when she was 16, so perfectly captures the life of a young person living with dyspraxia.

Other useful resources are:

Vera McLuckie and the Daydream Club by Jane Evans (younger children)

Dyscover Yourself by Gill Dixon (aimed at 7 to 10 year olds)

You're so clumsy Charlie by Jane Binnion

My friend Josh by Christine Draper

These and many other books and useful resources can be found on our online bookshop here <https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/shopping/product-category/books>

CBBC television programme Tree Fu Tom, worked in conjunction with Dr Sally Payne (Dyspraxia Foundation Trustee) on the movements involved in the series.

Games and activities such as jigsaws, drawing /painting, building blocks, maze puzzles all help with spatial awareness and perception as well as fine motor skills.

For some children encouraging them to take up a martial art may also be beneficial.

More information can be found on our website or contact the Helpline

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

Further information available from:

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