



Leeds Bradford Neurophysiotherapy

Developmental Co-ordination Disorder



An introduction

For assessment, advice/treatment
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Introduction

This booklet is for parents, carers and teachers and children's workers.

The aims of this booklet are;

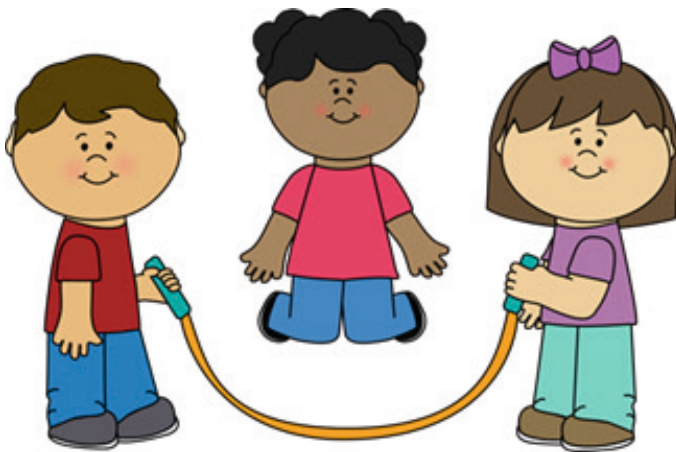
- ◆ To help minimise the impact of co-ordination problems through understanding the problem, learning ways of coping & knowing what to do to reduce the impact of their difficulties.
- ◆ To maintain a child's self-esteem. It is not always about how poor the skills are, but how the child feels about them, how others around the child react to the problem, and what support is available to the child.
- ◆ To see how DCD affects children differently, and outline strategies that you can use easily.

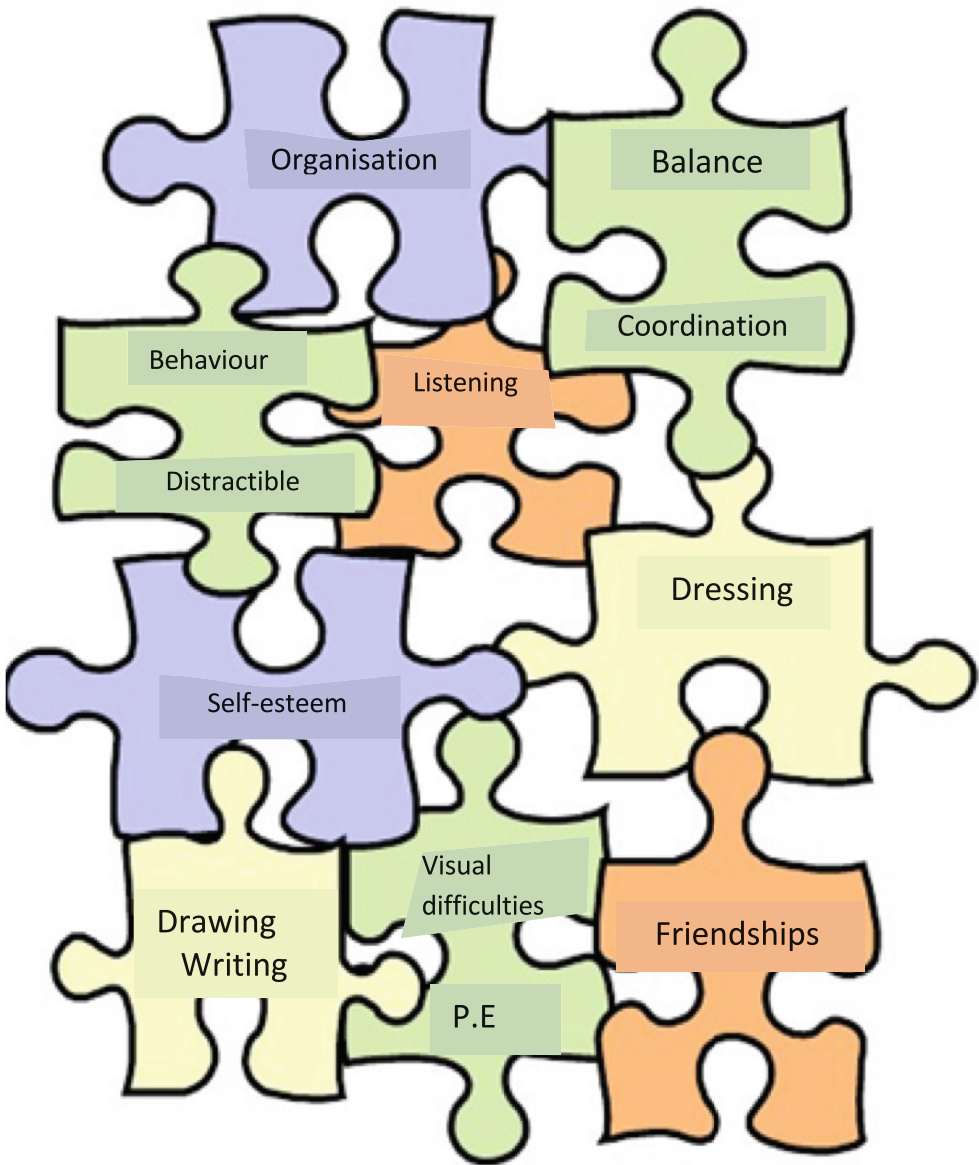


What are the common terms and diagnoses used?

Over the last 20 years there have been many terms used to describe children with coordination difficulties, such as "clumsy child syndrome". Dyspraxia, Developmental Dyspraxia or Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) have become more popular. DCD is now the most commonly accepted term in the UK and Europe.

A diagnosis of DCD will be made by a Paediatrician in conjunction with information from the Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist.





The jigsaw puzzle is an illustration of the type of difficulties that you may see. These vary from child to child. It is the combination and not the individual problems that leads to difficulties, and makes it harder for the child to cope.

You may also find that the child has some associated problems including;

- Visual perceptual difficulties (ability to interpret visual information) i.e. walking downstairs, find a pair of socks in a drawer
- Poor memory
- Attention problems
- Low self-esteem
- Behaviour problems
- Reduced activity and fitness level
- Slow to learn new and everyday activities i.e. shoelaces, buttons etc
- May look unusual in the way they go about some activities

How can therapy help?

A standardised assessment (using the Movement ABC test) together with information from family and /or school is key to guiding therapy.

Areas of concern to the child and family are addressed and different approaches employed to overcoming them, sometimes this can be specific exercises/activities, or teaching compensatory strategies.

What can you do to help?

1. Understand that there is a problem

The child cannot help having these difficulties. Some children develop emotional problems as a result, so the support and understanding of adults around them is very important. Getting further information through books and the internet can help.



2. Modify expectations & the environment

It is important that the child works at his/her own level in P.E sessions and in the classroom and does not receive negative feedback. They may develop a way of coping e.g. messing around or avoiding an activity. Coping strategies can be a great help to the child faced with these difficulties. For example, using elastic laces/ Velcro fasteners to aid dressing. Children with poor handwriting could benefit from pencil grips/chunky pencils/sloping desks or could use a laptop. Refer to your therapist for more ideas.

3. Coordination of the child's needs

With each new school year, the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and parents may need to liaise with the new teacher to explain the child's strengths and areas of weakness to ensure their needs continue to be met.

4. Maintain the child's self esteem

It is important that parents & teachers use strategies to help develop self-esteem such as setting tasks that are just the right challenge for the child and encourage success. Avoid putting the child in a stressful situation where failure is likely, for example, competitive sports which may require skills that the child is not yet ready to master.



5. Child directed learning and practice

Work with the child on a skill they want to be better at. Encourage the child to choose one skill at a time such as putting socks on or catching a ball. Be patient, and practice regularly without the pressure of time. Try dividing the task into smaller parts. Praise the child for their effort.

6. Increase opportunity for experiences

Visit the park and soft play areas regularly. Try replacing T.V./computer time with physical activities. Regular exercise is important for fitness & wellbeing. Try to find after-school/weekend activities with a supportive leader who will help the child achieve at their own pace and who will give support and encouragement. Try different activities until they find one they enjoy.



Further Reading:

"Dyspraxia, a guide for parents and teachers"

by Kate Ripley, Bob Daines & Jenny Barrett

David Fulton

Publishers ISBN 1-85346-444-9

Dyspraxia: The Hidden Handicap

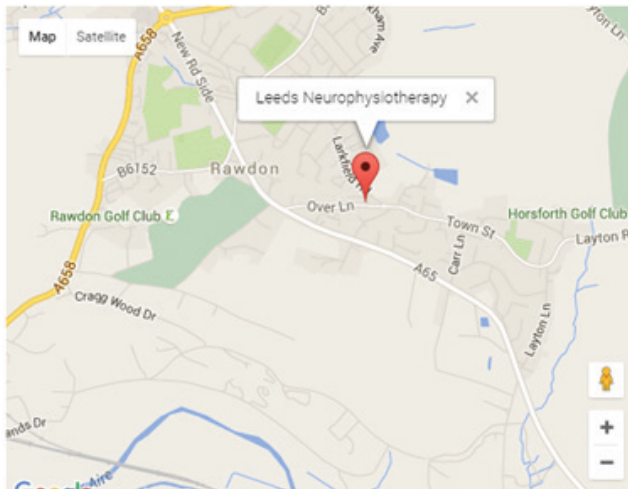
by Amanda Kirby

Souvenir Press ISBN 0285635123

"The Out-of-Sync child"

By Carol Stock Kranowitz

Pedigree Publishing ISBN 0399531653



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