DYSPRAXIA
FOUNDATION
Incorporating Developmental
Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)

Talking to your GP about dyspraxia – prompts for parents/carers

While not everyone wants or needs a diagnosis, discovering if there is a reason to explain the daily challenges a child or young person faces is important for some. A thorough diagnostic assessment by professionals with the right skills and expertise can:

- help parents/carers identify what to do to support their child’s development and wellbeing
- enable the young person to access therapy and school support
- help the young person make sense of their experiences
- ensure parents/carers/young people are signposted to relevant sources of information and advice

Pathways (or processes) for diagnosis of dyspraxia – or developmental coordination disorder/DCD as it’s known to health professionals - vary and, in some areas, a clear pathway doesn’t exist. Your first point of contact may be your GP who should refer your child on to the appropriate local service. In some areas, paediatricians will accept direct referrals from parents – in this case you can use the following information to guide your conversation with the paediatrician.

Make an appointment with your GP to talk specifically about dyspraxia/DCD. If you try including it in a consultation about other matters, there may not be time for the GP to consider your concerns properly. Whilst GPs can contribute to the diagnostic process, other professionals need to be involved. Usually, the main role of the GP is to refer your child for specialist assessment.

Explain why you think your child may have dyspraxia/DCD and how you think a diagnosis will help. Say something like “We think ** has some of the difficulties experienced by people with dyspraxia/DCD and would like your help to get an assessment and support.”

Give examples of the difficulties your child experiences, such as:

At home

- using cutlery
- getting dressed
- brushing teeth/hair

At school

- writing
- following instructions
- doing PE

Elsewhere

- learning to ride a bike
- frequent trips and falls
- communicating with peers

Explain how these difficulties affect your child’s independence, school performance and confidence. You could ask your child’s teacher for a letter describing their observations and concerns to support your own.

Ask for help – not all GPs will understand dyspraxia/DCD so it may be useful to print a copy of the ‘Dyspraxia at a glance’ page from the Dyspraxia Foundation website to take with you. Do some research before your appointment to find out which local service can help – for example the children’s occupational therapy, physiotherapy or speech and language therapy service, or a paediatrician. It can be helpful to see a paediatrician before an occupational therapy or physiotherapy assessment to rule out other possible explanations for your child’s difficulties, but local arrangements and waiting times vary.

Once the referral has been made, the GP may no longer be involved.

If no local service has been commissioned for the assessment/diagnosis of dyspraxia/DCD, you can ask to be referred to a different provider. This will also help raise awareness that a local diagnostic pathway is needed.

If your GP doesn’t feel it’s appropriate or necessary to make a referral you could ask to see another GP at the same surgery. If you want to complain, you can follow the GP complaints procedure.

Further information available from: Dyspraxia Foundation, 8 West Alley Hitchin Herts SG5 1EG Helpline Tel: 01462 454986 Admin Tel: 01462 455016 Fax: 01462 455052 Web: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk © Dyspraxia Foundation

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