



# Handy Handouts®

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## Dyspraxia – Symptoms and Treatment

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### What is dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia is a disorder/disability that affects motor skill development, making it difficult for individuals to plan and/or complete fine motor tasks as simple as waving goodbye or as complex as brushing teeth. Dyspraxia, however, does not affect the one's intelligence, although it can cause learning problems in children.

The *National Center for Learning Disabilities* estimates that dyspraxia affects at least two percent of the general population, with 70% of those being males. The NCLD also estimates that as many as six percent of *all* children show some signs of dyspraxia.

Someone with dyspraxia can learn to function independently by special learning methods and repeated practice of basic tasks. Occupational, physical, or speech therapy for some individuals may also be helpful.

### Does dyspraxia ever go away?

Unfortunately, dyspraxia is a lifelong disability. Its severity, symptoms, and effects vary from person to person at different stages of life. Dyspraxia affects many basic functions required for independent daily living and falls into one or more of the following categories:

**Ideomotor Dyspraxia** – Completing single-step motor tasks such as combing hair and waving goodbye.

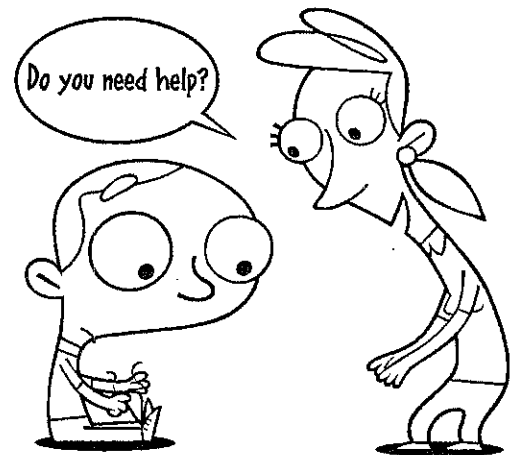
**Ideational Dyspraxia** – Completing multi-step tasks: brushing teeth, making a bed, putting clothes on in order, buttoning, buckling, or lacing.

**Oromotor Dyspraxia** – Coordinating muscle movements needed to pronounce words.

**Constructional Dyspraxia** – Establishing spatial relationships, e.g., accurately positioning or moving objects from one place to another.

Dyspraxia often exists along with learning disabilities: dyslexia (e.g., trouble reading, writing and spelling), dyscalculia (e.g., trouble with mathematics), and other conditions that impact learning such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Some symptoms of all of these disorders are similar in nature.

Weaknesses in comprehension, information processing, and listening can also contribute to the troubles experienced by people with dyspraxia. They may also have low self-esteem, suffer from depression, and have other emotional and behavioral issues.



### Are there warning signs for dyspraxia?

Babies with dyspraxia may avoid crawling, rolling over, and other tasks involving motor skills. As they get older, children with dyspraxia are prone to other problems listed on the next page. *Having these problems does not necessarily mean one has dyspraxia.* If problems continue, consider having your child tested by trained professionals. You and your child may benefit from special help. If these troubles continue over time, the NCLD suggests you consider having your child tested for dyslexia which sometimes accompanies dyspraxia.

Young Children Trouble With:	School-Age Children Trouble With:	Teens and Adults Trouble With:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to walk, jump, hop, skip, throw, or catch a ball</li> <li>• Pronouncing words and being understood</li> <li>• Establishing left- or right-handedness</li> <li>• Bumping into things</li> <li>• Moving the eyes— instead, moving the whole head</li> <li>• Being sensitive to touch: irritated by clothing on skin, hair brushing, nail-cutting, or teeth-brushing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor pencil grip and letter formation, slow handwriting</li> <li>• Fine motor skills: holding a pencil, buttoning, cutting with scissors</li> <li>• Playing sports, riding a bike, and other activities requiring coordination</li> <li>• Sensing direction</li> <li>• Speaking at a normal rate or in way that can be easily understood</li> <li>• Making social connections due to speech challenges</li> <li>• Phobias and obsessive behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech control— volume, pitch, articulation</li> <li>• Writing and typing</li> <li>• Over- or under-sensitivity to light, touch, space, taste, or smells</li> <li>• Personal grooming and other self-help activities</li> <li>• Cooking or other household chores</li> <li>• Driving</li> <li>• Clumsiness</li> </ul>

### Is there treatment for dyspraxia?

Yes. Early identification and intervention can help, but there is no cure. Depending upon the severity of one's dyspraxia, working with occupational, speech, and physical therapists can improve a person's ability to function and succeed independently. For a young child having trouble communicating or moving steadily, parents must offer patience, encouragement, help, and support.

Children with dyspraxia must practice the simplest tasks step-by-step and progress toward more complex activities. Engage your child with easy physical activities that help develop their coordination, which in turn increases confidence. Encourage your child or teen's friendships to help broaden their social experiences and understanding of social relationships.

#### Resources

Dyspraxia Foundation USA. *Symptoms*. Retrieved September, 2013, from <http://www.dyspraxiausa.org/symptoms/>.

Medical News Today. (2013). *What is dyspraxia? How is dyspraxia treated?* Retrieved September, 2013, from <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/151951.php>

National Center for Learning Disabilities. (2012). *What is dyspraxia?* Retrieved September, 2013, from <http://www.nclld.org/types-learning-disabilities/dyspraxia/what-is-dyspraxia>

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### Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit [www.superduperinc.com](http://www.superduperinc.com) and type in the **item name or number in our search engine**. Click the links below to see the product descriptions.

*Photo Fine Motor Fun Deck*  
[Item #FDF-02](#)

*Fine Motor Fun Deck*  
[Item #FD-105](#)

*Sensory Diet Cards*  
[Item #CRD-33](#)

*Move Your Body Fun Deck*  
[Item #FD-116](#)

*Upper Body and Core Strength Fun Deck*  
[Item #FD-106](#)

*Yogarilla Exercises and Activities*  
[Item #OTSC-8609](#)

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