



Handy Handouts®

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Beyond Just Clumsy: Developmental Coordination Disorder

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What is DCD?

Bumping into furniture and accidents on the playground are all a part of growing up. But what if your child struggles with movement throughout the day, every day? Those who struggle with learning motor tasks and coordination could present with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), which has also been called dyspraxia and global apraxia. DCD is a neuro developmental disorder, meaning that the source of the problem is in the brain (as opposed to weakness in the muscles) and becomes more apparent as children grow. It is estimated that 5 to 6% of children have DCD, occurring more frequently in boys than girls. It is unclear where in the brain the problem starts, but it is typically first observed around age 5 and persists until adulthood.



Children with DCD are as intelligent as other children their age, but the signal from the brain to the muscles is disrupted, which can cause problems with the following:



- **Gross motor movement**

– Gross motor skills use the larger muscle groups. Someone with DCD may struggle with walking up and down stairs, running and jumping during play, and playing sports.



- **Fine motor movement**

– Fine motor skills are defined by small, precise movements of the hands. Someone with DCD may struggle with holding utensils, cutting with scissors, handwriting, and typing.



- **Motor planning and coordination**

– Motor planning skills are used to sequence movements to accomplish a task (e.g. First open the toothpaste, then put toothpaste on the brush...). Someone with DCD may struggle with routines like getting dressed, navigating around furniture and people without bumping into them, and driving. Motor planning can also impact balance, which would make it difficult to sit in a chair.