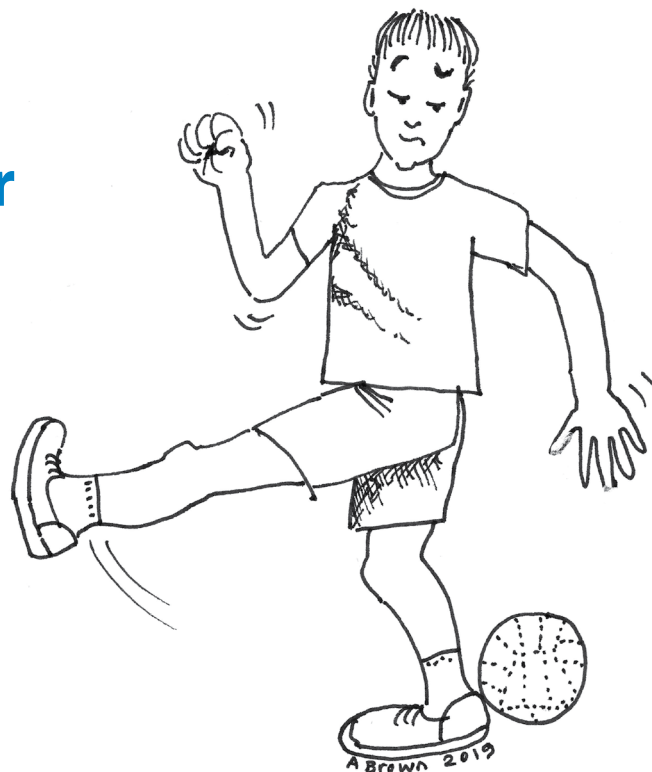


# Developmental Coordination Disorder Information Sheet

## What is Developmental Coordination Disorder?

**Developmental Coordination Disorder** (DCD) is a unique disorder impacting on motor coordination skills. It affects around 5 to 6% of the population. DCD is often seen in families, with boys more likely to be affected than girls. Children with DCD may also have other diagnoses such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Specific Language Impairment (SLI) or mental health difficulties.

**Motor coordination** is the ability to use multiple body parts for a particular action. For example, dribbling a basketball means using your arm and hand to bounce the ball while your feet and legs move you around the court.



## Children with DCD may

- Have difficulty with tasks which require motor coordination, such as:
- Sports – e.g. having difficulty in balance, being unable to jump, hop, skip;
- Self-care skills – e.g. poor body awareness, inability to coordinate dressing; and/or
- School skills – e.g. handwriting, drawing, scissor skills;
- Take extra time to learn new physical tasks and slow to do them e.g. tying laces;
- Be disorganised and distractible;
- Be able to complete a task one day then not the next;
- Be clumsy and uncoordinated;
- Use many different motor plans to complete a task (e.g. hold scissors lots of different ways); and/or
- Have difficulty manipulating tools and hold them awkwardly (e.g. fork, pencil, scissors).

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## How is DCD Assessed?

Assessment for DCD is conducted by an experienced health professional (e.g. occupational therapist, physiotherapist or exercise physiologist). A medical practitioner must make the final diagnosis to rule out other possible explanations for the child's difficulties in motor coordination.

## How can Occupational Therapists Support Children and Adolescents with DCD?

Occupational Therapists have a key role in the diagnosis and management of a child or young person with DCD. Early and effective intervention for this condition is important. Occupational therapy management is individualised to meet the goals of the child and family. Occupational therapists will involve other people in the management of DCD such as teachers, caregivers, parents and other health professionals. Occupational therapy reports can be used by families and schools to request special provisions within the education system, including for examinations.

## How to find an Occupational Therapist

If you are concerned about a child's motor coordination or development and would like to learn more, you can contact a local Occupational Therapist. Occupational Therapists who work with children in Western Australia can work in the government, non-government and private sectors. DOT(WA) has information on how to find the best OT to meet a child's needs and rebates which may be available for families choosing to access a private service

<https://dotwa.org.au/find-an-ot/>

## Further Resources

The Western Australian Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) Research Group has information on current research, intervention programs, services for families and professional resources

<https://www.movegrowengage.com.au/>

CanChild has some excellent printable resources on DCD identification and management

<https://canchild.ca/en/diagnoses/developmental-coordination-disorder/dcd-educational-materials-for-home-school-physicians-and-other-health-professionals>

The European Academy of Childhood Disability published a Clinical Practice Guideline detailing the definition, diagnosis, assessment and intervention of DCD published in 2011.

<https://www.eacd.org/publications.php>

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