

Motor Dysgraphia

Information Sheet

What is Motor Dysgraphia?

Motor dysgraphia is a difficulty with the fine motor skills necessary to write letters, words and numbers; that is, the child or adolescent sees the graphic pictures but cannot make the movements necessary for writing. Motor Dysgraphia is a learning disorder where the individual's writing skills are below the level expected for their age and cognitive level.

Motor dysgraphia often includes illegible handwriting, decreased writing speed, discrepancies between oral and written output and processing difficulties.

Motor dysgraphia is more than just "poor handwriting", it is chronic, persistent, affects function and is a significant long-term problem for children and adolescents.

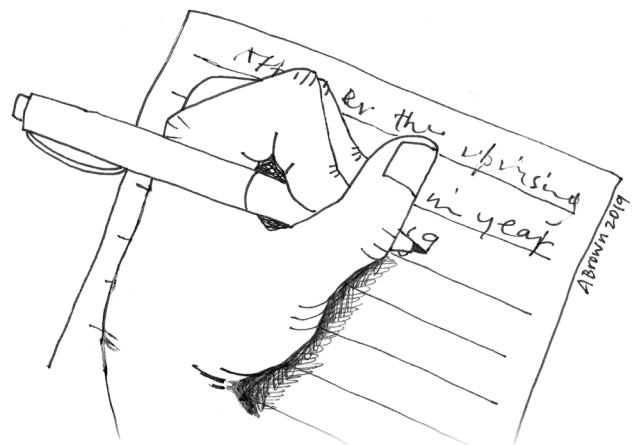
What does Motor Dysgraphia look like?

- Poor fine motor skills
- Poor posture
- Illegible handwriting
- Difficulties with organisation of writing
- Ideas conveyed when speaking are stronger than writing
- Poor pencil grasp
- Inconsistencies in handwriting
- Reduced handwriting speed
- Avoidance of writing tasks



How is Motor Dysgraphia assessed?

An **Occupational Therapist** will assess a child or adolescent using clinical observations and a range of standardised assessments, obtain a comprehensive developmental, medical, educational and social-emotional history of the child or adolescent, evaluate samples of their handwriting and writing, liaise closely with parents, teachers and other professionals involved with the child or adolescent, and thereby make a clinical judgement on a case-by-case basis as to whether the child's or adolescent's difficulties suggest the presence of **Motor Dysgraphia**.



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How can Occupational Therapists support children and adolescents with Motor Dysgraphia?

Occupational Therapists can support children and adolescents by helping them to access individual interventions with a suitably qualified Occupational Therapist, by making modifications to the tasks and/or the child's or adolescent's environment, by advocating for the child or adolescent, and by providing reports for accommodations/special provisions in the classroom and assessments, if the **Motor Dysgraphia** is having a significant functional impact on the child's or adolescent's participation in their learning within the classroom, in assessments, and at home.

Occupational therapists have a vital role in liaising and setting clear expectations when supporting children and adolescents, and their families and educators to appropriately access learning, as well as navigating the assessment and reporting processes for special provisions.

How to find an Occupational Therapist

Occupational Therapists who work with children and adolescents in Western Australia work in the government, non-government and private sectors. If you want to refer a child or adolescent for assessment by an Occupational Therapist, DOT(WA) has information on how to find an Occupational Therapist suitably qualified to meet the child's or adolescent's needs, and also provides information regarding rebates which may be available for families choosing to access a private service.

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

Further Resources

The DSF Literacy and Clinical Services (The Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation of WA Inc.) website provides information about specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia, assessment services, tutors and professional learning opportunities, and also have a library and a bookshop.

<https://dsf.net.au/>

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) website provides important information regarding accommodations/special provisions in the classroom and assessments e.g. Guidelines for Disability Adjustments for Timed Assessments (2015).

<https://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/>

The CanChild website provides information regarding evidence-based resources, such as, "To Type or Write – That is the Question!", which provides answers to the following frequently asked questions:

- When to type or write?;
- Printing versus cursive writing?;
- When to introduce keyboarding?;
- Best method of instruction?.

<https://canchild.ca/en/resources/128-to-write-or-totype-that-is-the-question>

The Independent Living Centre of WA (ILC) Technology and Communication Service provides information and advice about assistive technologies for communication, learning, recreation and work, and is staffed by occupational therapists and speech pathologists who have extensive experience, knowledge and skill in working with the latest assistive technologies and communication aids.

<https://ilc.com.au/services/ilc-technology/>

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