



DYSPRAXIA

WHAT IT IS, AND HOW TO HELP

What is a dyspraxia? It is a common form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD) that impacts fine/ and or gross motor skills, considered a "hidden disability." It is caused by the brain's difficulty with transmitting motor signals to the rest of the body. Cognition, learning, sensory, communication, and interaction challenges are common. Consequently, individuals may also have social and emotional difficulties due to low-self esteem. Individuals are often labeled as "clumsy, lazy, or forgetful." It is important to remember the child has motor-neuron challenges which make learning novel tasks very difficult. They are required to work harder than their same-aged peers to compensate for these difficulties, and often require more time, repetition, and support.

CHALLENGES OF DYSPRAXIA

- Motor coordination
- Memory, Organization
- Time management
- Sequencing skills
- Math
- Riding a bike, Tying shoes
- Handwriting, Copying
- Visual perception, Tracking
- Speech & Social interactions
- Social/ Emotional
- Completing & initiating tasks
- Bilateral utensil usage

HOW TO HELP IN THE CLASSROOM

- Limit the need to copy (highlight, provide notes)
- Breakdown tasks
- Use clear, specific language
- Encourage motor-based extracurricular activities
- Work on 1 task at a time
- Allow students to explore new tasks prior to class' introduction
- Offer a variety of writing utensils, slantboards, movement breaks to class to demystify individual needs
- Keep calm, positive, and support their confidence
- Teach skills the same way