

Diagnosis Dictionary

[Abuse/Neglect](#)[Addictions/Substance Abuse](#)[Aging](#)[Anxiety/Phobia](#)[Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity](#)[Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity
Disorder, Adult](#)[Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity
Disorder, Children](#)[Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity
Disorder, Teen](#)

Dyspraxia

Reviewed by Psychology Today Staff

Dyspraxia is a neurological disorder that affects the planning and coordination of fine and gross motor skills; it may also affect [memory](#), judgment, perception, information processing, and other cognitive abilities. The most common form of dyspraxia is developmental coordination disorder, and the terms are often used interchangeably. Because it can affect so many different areas of the brain and body, dyspraxia takes different forms in different people.

Dyspraxia is often recognized in early [childhood](#) when a child experiences a delay in achieving normal motor milestones (such as sitting up, crawling, walking). The symptoms can last into [adolescence](#) and adulthood. Although dyspraxia can appear on its own, it often coexists with other disorders, such as [ADHD](#), dyslexia, and [autism](#). While dyspraxia is not a learning disorder, it can affect a person's ability to learn and to participate fully in routine academic, social, and professional

Developmental Coordination
Disorder

Dysgraphia

Dyspraxia

Bipolar Disorders

Child/Adolescent

Asperger's Syndrome

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity
Disorder, Children

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Child Abuse

Child Neglect

Childhood-Onset Fluency Disorder

Communication Disorders

Conduct Disorder

Disinhibited Social Engagement
Disorder

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation
Disorder (Children and
Adolescents)

Dyscalculia

Dysgraphia

Dyslexia

Dyspraxia

activities.

Symptoms

Symptoms of dyspraxia usually start appearing early in life. Early on, babies with dyspraxia can be overly irritable and have problems with feeding. In toddlerhood, the child may continue to have problems with normal feeding and display other developmental delays, such as having difficulty with toilet training, refusing to play with puzzles or toys that require construction, and seeming unable to throw and catch a ball.

Children with dyspraxia may frequently drop things and have trouble with activities that involve hand-eye coordination. For instance, they often have trouble managing buttons, zippers, and snaps. It's not unusual for children with dyspraxia to avoid physical activity out of shame or embarrassment, resulting in a lack of muscle development. Weak muscle tone can result in difficulty in sports and gym classes and even standing for any length of time. Children with dyspraxia frequently have speech and writing delays, can be forgetful and often lose things, and have trouble picking up on nonverbal social cues.

Problems with motor coordination, **memory**, perception, speech and language skills, following directions, and **emotional control** usually persist

Encopresis

Enuresis

Intellectual Disability (Intellectual Developmental Disorder)

Language Disorder

Learning Disability

Nonverbal Learning Disorder

Pedophilia

Provisional Tic Disorder

Reactive Attachment Disorder

Selective Mutism

Separation Anxiety

Speech Sound Disorder

Tourette's Disorder

Communication Disorders

Depression/Mood

Dissociation

Eating Disorders

Impulse Control Disorders

Movement Disorders

Neurocognitive Disorders

Alzheimer's Disease

into adulthood, causing difficulties with planning, organization, **concentration**, and accuracy. The result is often erratic or impulsive behavior, or a tendency to avoid new or unpredictable situations or those that require **teamwork**. These ongoing problems can result in a variety of emotional and behavioral problems, including **depression, anxiety, stress** disorders, low **self-esteem**, fears and phobias, and addictions.

How common is dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia is thought to affect anywhere from 6 to 10 percent of children to some degree, with 2 percent being severely affected, according to the Dyspraxia Foundation. Males are more likely to develop the condition than females are.

Does dyspraxia affect a child's intelligence?

No, having dyspraxia doesn't make someone less smart. However, it can affect **working memory, which can lead to poorer performance in the classroom** regardless of **intelligence**. Understanding individual weaknesses of a dyspraxic student can help schools provide specific and targeted accommodations to increase the child's chances of academic success.

Dyscalculia

Dysgraphia

Dyslexia

Dyspraxia

Frontotemporal Dementia

Intellectual Disability (Intellectual
Developmental Disorder)

Lewy Body Dementia

Neurocognitive Disorders (Mild and
Major)

Obsessive-Compulsive
Spectrum Disorders

Personality

Psychosis/Schizophrenia
Spectrum Disorders

Sexuality

Sleep Disorders

Somatization

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Causes

The exact cause of dyspraxia is unknown. Risk factors for the condition include premature birth, low birth weight, a family history of the condition, and exposure to [alcohol](#) or drug use during [pregnancy](#), according to the [DSM-5](#). Co-occurring conditions, particularly [attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#), can have a significant impact on how the condition presents.

Does dyspraxia run in families?

While no genetic cause of dyspraxia has been proven, many parents of children with dyspraxia will be able to identify other family members who also struggled with the condition.

Do dyspraxia and autism go together?

Despite common confusion, dyspraxia is not a form of [autism](#). Both conditions can share similar symptoms, including language delay, an inability to express feelings verbally, trouble making eye contact, and [sensory processing](#) difficulties. [A dyspraxic child incorrectly diagnosed as having autism](#) will make little

progress in managing their symptoms. Careful evaluation and diagnosis by experts is critical, as dyspraxia can appear alongside autism or on its own.

Dyspraxia Resources

Get Help

Find a therapist who works with children and adolescents.

Connected Topics

[Child Development](#)

[Education](#)

[Neuroscience](#)

Diagnosis

[Developmental Coordination Disorder](#)

[Nonverbal Learning Disorder](#)

[Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

Treatment

Dyspraxia cannot be cured, but people with this condition can still lead a full and satisfying life. Treatment can help them manage their symptoms and improve muscle tone and coordination. In addition, a diagnosis of dyspraxia can allow a child to qualify for occupational [therapy](#), [speech therapy](#), and other special services and accommodations through the school system.

At home, children can be encouraged to participate in physical activities and active play to strengthen muscle tone and improve physical coordination. Individual sports, like swimming and biking, are often helpful to keep a child physically active and reduce the risk of obesity. Children can work on puzzle skills and activities such as tossing a beanbag to improve eye-hand coordination. Simple interventions, like the use of pencil grips or learning to type, can help with communication skills.

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Can you grow out of dyspraxia?

For some children, very mild dyspraxia

symptoms may disappear over time. However, in most cases, dyspraxia will continue to affect a person into their [teen](#) and adult years. Coordination problems tend to become less of an issue as someone ages and has more autonomy and control over their life, and ongoing dyspraxia symptoms become more manageable with an effective treatment plan in place.

How can teens and adults cope with symptoms of dyspraxia?

Teens and adults with dyspraxia may find occupational therapy useful for learning practical everyday skills, such as driving or DIY projects. In [cognitive behavioral](#) therapy, they can learn how to break free of the harmful thinking patterns that often arise as a result of dealing with a chronic condition.

Find a Child Therapist

Get the help you need from a therapist near you—a FREE service from Psychology Today.

References

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