CPNI
Cyprus Paediatric Neurology Institute
Παιδονευρολογικό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου

LEAFLET FOR PARENTS AND PATIENTS

Developmental coordination disorder (dyspraxia)

Developmental coordination disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a common condition in which a child finds it harder than other children of the same age to learn and carry out everyday movements. It affects about 5 in every 100 children. It is not caused by low intelligence or lack of effort, and with the right support children can do very well.

Signs you may notice

- Seems clumsy, trips or bumps into things more than other children
- Was late to reach milestones such as crawling, walking or riding a bike
- Finds dressing, buttons, shoelaces and using cutlery difficult
- Has slow or untidy handwriting, and finds scissors and drawing hard
- Finds ball games, sport and PE difficult
- Has difficulty organising themselves, their belongings and schoolwork
- Tires easily, avoids physical activities or loses confidence

DCD and other conditions

DCD often occurs together with other conditions, so we look for these too:

- Attention difficulties and ADHD
- Speech and language difficulties
- Dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties
- Autism

DAMP: attention, motor control and perception

Some children have both attention difficulties and problems with movement and perception. This combination has been described, particularly in Scandinavia, as DAMP: Deficits in Attention, Motor control and Perception.

- Attention: difficulty concentrating, being easily distracted or restless
- Motor control: clumsiness, poor balance and difficulty with fine hand movements
- Perception: difficulty judging space, distance and direction, for example when copying from the board

Today this is usually described as ADHD together with DCD, but the idea behind DAMP remains useful: these children need support with attention, movement and learning together.

How DCD is diagnosed

- There is no single test: the diagnosis is based on your child's history, an examination and how they manage everyday movement tasks
- We first make sure there is no other cause, such as cerebral palsy, a muscle condition or a problem with vision
- An occupational therapist or physiotherapist often carries out standardised movement assessments
- The diagnosis is usually made from around 5 years of age

What happens at CPNI

- A detailed history of your child's development, school progress and family history
- A full neurological examination
- Questionnaires from home and school, including attention if ADHD is suspected
- Further tests only if needed, to rule out other conditions
- We explain the findings, agree a plan with you and work closely with therapists and the school

Therapy and support

- ✓ Occupational therapy for handwriting, dressing and other everyday skills
- ✓ Physiotherapy for balance, coordination and strength
- ✓ Practising real tasks in small steps, which is the approach that works best
- ✓ Support at school, such as extra time, typing on a laptop, pencil grips, a sloping writing board and adapted PE
- ✓ Treatment for ADHD or other conditions, if present

How you can help at home

- ✓ Break tasks into small steps and practise them often
- ✓ Allow extra time and avoid rushing your child
- ✓ Choose clothes and shoes that are easy to manage, such as elastic waists and Velcro fastenings
- ✓ Encourage activities your child enjoys, such as swimming, cycling or dancing
- ✓ Use checklists and pictures for daily routines
- ✓ Praise effort to build confidence, and keep teachers informed

When to seek advice promptly

Please contact us or your doctor soon if your child:

- Loses skills they had before
- Has movement that is getting worse rather than better
- Becomes weak, falls more often or has difficulty walking
- Develops unusual movements, a tremor or stiff muscles
- Becomes very low in mood or anxious about school

Notes for your appointment

Write down what you notice at home and at school and any questions, and bring this to your appointment.

Date	What I noticed (home or school)	Questions to ask

Contact CPNI

Worried about your child’s coordination? Call our office on +357 22 476 627 to arrange an assessment, or email cpni2007@gmail.com. We see children through GeSY, and privately if they are not GeSY beneficiaries, in Nicosia and Limassol.

More leaflets and information: www.cpni.com.cy

This leaflet gives general information. It does not replace advice from your child's doctor.

Reviewed by Dr Paola Nicolaides, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, November 2026.

© Cyprus Paediatric Neurology Institute
+357 22 476 627 · cpni2007@gmail.com · www.cpni.com.cy