

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

BOOKS OF INTEREST	PAGE 6
ORGANIZATIONS OF NOTE	PAGE 6

UPCOMING  
EVENTS

WORKSHOP WITH  
DR. STEVEN SHAW  
FOR TEACHERS AND  
PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH  
STUDENTS WITH MILD  
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES  
APRIL 9, 2018  
CHÉRIBOURG HOTEL,  
ORFORD, QC

DCD ONLINE WORKSHOP

HERE IS A LINK TO AN ONLINE  
WORKSHOP ON DCD. THIS  
WORKSHOP IS OFFERED IN  
FRENCH AND ENGLISH.  
[https://canchild.ca/en/  
diagnoses/developmental-  
coordination-disorder/  
workshops](https://canchild.ca/en/diagnoses/developmental-coordination-disorder/workshops)

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR  
MENTAL HEALTH  
2017-2018 LECTURE SERIES

Nov. 15, 2017:

SUICIDE PREVENTION IN  
SCHOOLS with SHARON CASEY  
FEB. 7, 2018:

CHANGING OUR LENS ABOUT  
TROUBLED KIDS with DR.  
DELPHINE COLLIN-VÉZINA  
MARCH 14, 2018:

RESPONDING IN TIMES OF CRISIS  
with DR. CINDY FINN

COPY EDITOR  
Robin Colyer

## The Awkward Facts

by Kymberley Morin

At one time or another, teachers had a student who just came across as clumsy, disorganized, or struggled with the most straightforward task such as managing a zipper or tying shoes. Regardless of how many times teachers have tried to help him or her, it just didn't seem to make a difference.

**Dyspraxia** is the most commonly used term in the UK with varying definitions; but the most recent, formal and widely internationally used term to describe these children is **DCD**. It appears in both the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* and the *International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems*. (Kirby & Sugden, 2007)

Perhaps this student was having and still struggles with coordination difficulties and anything requiring a motor component impacted his or her acquisition of particular skills. It may also have interfered with his or her performance of daily living activities, academic, and self-care tasks. Chances are this student was part of "a little-recognized group [of children] who have a condition known as Development Coordination Disorder (DCD) [... that] affects 5-6% of school-aged children; that is approximately one child in every classroom." (Missiuna, Rivard, Pollock, 2004).

### What is Developmental Coordination Disorder?

Development Coordination Disorder (DCD) "is a movement skill syndrome involving physical awkwardness and a motor skill delay that impacts the child's ability to perform everyday tasks. Despite the high prevalence and the evidence that is accumulating about the secondary consequences of DCD, very little information about this disorder has been described in the educational literature. In an environment that stresses learning through "doing," children with DCD fall short of their potential because they have coordination difficulties that impact their academic, social and physical development." (Missiuna, Rivard, Pollock, 2004).

## The Awkward Facts (continued)

### What we know

Students with DCD have difficulty learning new motor skills and may experience difficulties in learning how to plan, organize, perform, and modify their movements. "They tend to use their vision more than other types of feedback to guide their movements and, because of this, their motor skills may be more like those of younger children. Children with DCD perform inconsistently from one occasion to the next, and they often perform motor skills in the same way over and over again, even when they are unsuccessful. Typically, children with DCD depend on feedback and are not able to predict the outcome of their movements. As a result, they don't easily recognize movement errors, learn from their mistakes, or correct their movements." (CanChild.Ca, 2017).

**Functional Consequences of Developmental Coordination Disorder**  
*Developmental coordination disorder leads to impaired functional performance in activities of daily living, and the impairment is increased with co-occurring conditions. Consequences of developmental coordination disorder include reduced participation in team play and sports; poor self-esteem and sense of self-worth; emotional or behaviour problems; impaired academic achievement; poor physical fitness; and reduced physical activity and obesity.*  
**DSM-V, 2013**

The inability to coordinate and learn how to move their bodies impacts how they learn to use strategies to problem-solve motor tasks. "Motor skills do not become automatic for these children, [and] they must devote extra effort and attention to complete motor tasks, even those that have been previously learned. Children with DCD often don't recognize the similarities of particular motor tasks, and this leads to difficulties transferring their motor learning from one activity to another (e.g., catching a large ball and then catching a small ball).

**Development Coordination Disorder (DCD) affects 5-6% of school aged children; that is approximately one child in every classroom.**

They also have difficulty generalizing their motor learning from one situation to another (e.g., a child approaching a sidewalk curb has to figure out that stepping up onto the sidewalk is similar to climbing stairs). Having to respond to a changing environment (e.g., when catching or hitting a moving ball, or when avoiding others during team play) poses an additional challenge for children with DCD because they find it hard to monitor incoming information from the environment and to make their bodies respond in a timely way. The result of any of these problems is the same: children with DCD appear clumsy and awkward, and will have difficulty learning and performing new motor tasks." (CanChild, 2017.)

## The Awkward Facts (continued)

The following characteristics that could be observed in children with DCD is provided by CanChild Research Centre of McMaster University.

When describing children with DCD, it is important to recognize that they are a very mixed group. Some children may experience difficulties in a variety of areas, while others may have problems only with specific activities.

### Physical Characteristics

1. The child may be clumsy or awkward in his/her movements. He/she may bump into, spill, or knock things over.
2. The child may experience difficulty with gross motor skills (whole body), fine motor skills (using hands), or both.
3. The child may be delayed in developing certain motor skills such as riding a tricycle/ bicycle, catching a ball, jumping rope, doing up buttons, and tying shoelaces.
4. The child may show a discrepancy between his/her motor abilities and his/her abilities in other areas. For example, intellectual and language skills may be quite strong while motor skills are delayed.
5. The child may have difficulty learning new motor skills. Once learned, certain motor skills may be performed quite well while others may continue to be performed poorly.
6. The child may have more difficulty with activities that require constant changes in his/ her body position or when he/she must adapt to changes in the environment (e.g., baseball, tennis).
7. The child may have difficulty with activities that require the coordinated use of both sides of the body (e.g., cutting with scissors, stride jumps, swinging a bat, or handling a hockey stick).
8. The child may exhibit poor postural control and poor balance particularly in activities that require balance (e.g. stair climbing, standing while dressing).
9. The child may have difficulty with printing or handwriting. This skill involves continually interpreting feedback about the movements of the hand while planning new movements, and is a very difficult task for most children with DCD.

## The Awkward Facts (continued)

### Emotional/Behavioural Characteristics

1. The child may show a lack of interest in, or avoid, particular activities, especially those that require a physical response. For a child with DCD, performing motor skills requires significant effort. Fatigue and repeated failure may cause the child to avoid participating in motor tasks.
2. The child may demonstrate a low frustration tolerance, decreased self-esteem, and a lack of motivation due to difficulties coping with activities that are required in all aspects of his/her life.
3. The child may avoid socializing with peers, particularly on the playground. Some children will seek out younger children to play with while others will play on their own or follow the educator or playground supervisor. This may be due to decreased self-confidence or avoidance of physical activities.
4. The child may seem dissatisfied with his/her performance (e.g., erases written work, complains of performance in motor activities, shows frustration with work product).
5. The child may be resistant to changes in his/her routine or in his/her environment. If the child has to expend a lot of effort to plan a task, then even a small change in how it is to be performed may present a significant problem for the child.

### Other Common Characteristics

1. The child may have difficulty balancing the need for speed with the need for accuracy. For example, handwriting may be very neat but extremely slow.
2. The child may have difficulty with academic subjects such as mathematics, spelling, or written language which require handwriting to be accurate and organized on the page.
3. The child may have difficulty with activities of daily living (e.g., dressing, using a knife and fork, brushing teeth, doing up zippers, organizing a backpack).
4. The child may have difficulty completing work within an expected time frame. Since tasks require much more effort, children may be more willing to be distracted and may become frustrated with a task that should be straightforward.
5. The child may have general difficulties organizing his/her desk, locker, homework, or even the space on a page.

The following link provides educators an overview of strategies that can be implemented to support students with DCD at school.

<https://canchild.ca/en/resources/123-children-with-motor-difficulties-for-educators>

## The Awkward Facts (continued)

Here are examples of some of the strategies that can be implemented.

What you might see...	How can you MATCH?
Avoids colouring or pre-printing activities	Provide thin markers or thicker pencils.
	Try a rubber pencil grip to assist with grasp.
	If letter recognition is the focus, allow children to identify by pointing, or to use magnetic letters or pictures of letters.
	Use alternate media (e.g., chalkboard, sand, Magnadoodle).
Avoids arts/crafts (cutting, pasting)	Reduce the amount of colouring required.
	Encourage the child to complete a small section of a larger task.
	Provide glue sticks.
	Provide good quality or adapted scissors.
	Encourage creativity and individuality rather than end-products.

For more detailed information and age appropriate strategies visit the following link.

<https://canchild.ca/en/resources/123-children-with-motor-difficulties-for-educators>

### References

American Psychiatric Association (2013). Developmental Coordination Disorder p.32. In Author (Ed.), Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th edition). Washington.

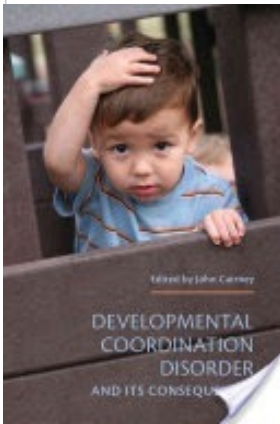
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Books of Interest!

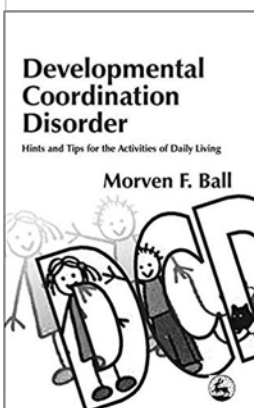


[Developmental Coordination Disorder and Its Consequences](#)

written by John Cairney  
University of Toronto Press, 2015

“Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects one in every twenty children. Children with DCD have problems with motor coordination that make everyday tasks such as active play, writing, eating, and dressing difficult and frustrating. Despite how common this health condition is, DCD is often misunderstood and frequently goes undiagnosed.”

[books.google.com](http://books.google.com)



[Developmental Coordination Disorder: Hints and Tips for the Activities of Daily Living](#)

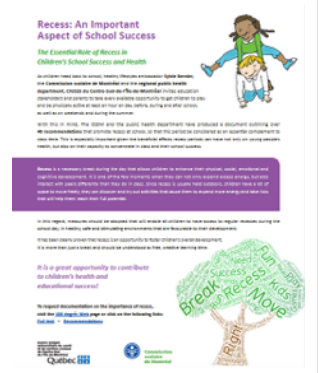
written by Morven Ball  
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002

“This easy-to-read booklet answers commonly asked

questions about DCD and presents all the necessary information to aid parents, carers and professionals in selecting the best options for their child; sometimes correcting the little things can lead to big results.” Amazon.ca

Organizations of Note!

[The Essential Role of Recess in Children’s School Success and Health](#)



As children head back to school, healthy lifestyles ambassador **Sylvie Bernier**, the

**Commission scolaire de Montréal** and the regional public health department, **CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l’Île-de-Montréal** invites education stakeholders and parents to take every available opportunity to get children to play and be physically active at least an hour an day, before, during and after school, as well as on weekends and during the summer.

<https://centdegres.ca/propos-de-nous/>



[CanChild - Developmental Coordination Disorder - FAQs](#)

Who are we?

Our Centre is one of 6 Centres of Excellence mandated by MELS to provide support, professional development, research activities and provincial expertise to the English sector. We service students who are physically, intellectually or multi-challenged in a school setting. Our team consists of our coordinator, Kimberley Morin and our secretary, Robin Colyer.

**Centre of Excellence for the Physically, Intellectually and Multi-Challenged**

Kymerley Morin , Coordinator

Robin Colyer, Secretary

<http://centrefexcellence.etsb.qc.ca>  
[centrefexcellence@etsb.qc.ca](mailto:centrefexcellence@etsb.qc.ca) 819-868-0512