

## Seeking A Diagnosis: What To Know

In the United States, there is not an established process or set of guidelines for obtaining a diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), also known as Dyspraxia. In addition, many healthcare professionals are not familiar with Dyspraxia/DCD. If your child's doctor is not familiar with this condition, you may want to share [Dyspraxia/DCD Information for Pediatricians and other Healthcare Providers](#).

A Dyspraxia/DCD diagnosis in the United States requires:

- **Acquisition and execution of motor skills substantially BELOW EXPECTATIONS** based on age,
- **Motor skill difficulties SIGNIFICANTLY INTERFERE WITH DAILY ACTIVITIES** and affect the child's ability to perform everyday tasks, participate in activities, and achieve at school,
- **Onset of symptoms during the EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD** that is not the result of an injury or illness, and
- **Motor skill deficits cannot be better explained by OTHER CONDITIONS**, such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and other neurological conditions.

There isn't a single test that definitely diagnoses Dyspraxia/DCD. This clinical diagnosis is based on a combination of assessments and observations. Ideally, the process of diagnosis should include a team of healthcare professionals including a physician, an Occupational Therapist (OT), Physical Therapist (PT), and/or a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) trained in the standardized tools used to assess children suspected of having the disorder. While an OT, PT or SLP cannot provide a formal diagnosis of Dyspraxia/DCD, they can provide valuable information to assist physicians in making the diagnosis.

**The type of physician to provide a formal diagnosis could be a:**

- Pediatrician
- Developmental pediatrician
- Pediatric neurologist
- Child psychiatrist
- Neuropsychologist
- Psychologist

A formal diagnosis of Dyspraxia/DCD is generally made when a child is 5 years or older. While there is no cure for Dyspraxia/DCD, early diagnosis and support can help children develop strategies to manage their challenges and thrive.

## Seeking A Diagnosis: What To Do And Expect

1. **Discuss your concerns** with your family doctor or your child's pediatrician. Share any relevant information, observations, or documentation that you may have. You may be referred to another physician, such as a developmental pediatrician or neurologist. Remember, in the United States, diagnosis of Dyspraxia/DCD must be made by a medical doctor. Most likely, multiple physicians and healthcare professionals will be involved in your child's evaluation.
2. **Your child's doctor(s) may recommend that an OT (Occupational Therapist) or PT (Physical Therapist) assess your child's motor skills.** This might involve tests like the Movement Assessment Battery for Children (Movement ABC) or the Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency. These assessments evaluate gross motor skills, such as balance and coordination, and fine motor skills, such as hand-eye coordination.  
**Your child's doctor(s) may refer you to a Speech-Language Pathologist/Therapist** for further evaluation .  
**Your child's doctor(s) may refer you to a neurological specialist for further evaluation and to rule out other possible causes of coordination difficulties,** such as Cerebral Palsy or Muscular Dystrophy.
3. **Your child's doctor(s) will gather/review information about your child's medical history, development, and the impact of coordination difficulties on daily life.** This may include:
  - Parent/Caregiver Questionnaires, such as the [Developmental Coordination Disorder Questionnaire \(DCDQ\)](#)
  - Clinical Interviews - Detailed conversations with the child and their family
  - Observation of the child's performance of everyday tasks, such as dressing, writing, or playing
  - Neurological assessments
  - Motor assessments
  - Speech and Language assessments
4. **If Dyspraxia/DCD is diagnosed,** the physician will explain the diagnosis and recommend therapeutic actions to consider and secure for your child.
5. **A full evaluation may also identify coexisting conditions,** such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, and/or Dysgraphia. If a coexisting condition is identified, the physician will explain the diagnosis and recommend therapeutic actions to consider and secure for your child.