



Classroom Setup for Children with DCD

Information for Educators

How does classroom set-up impact a child with DCD?

Children with DCD may have difficulty with their fine or gross motor skills (or both). They may drop objects, or knock into or fall over things; have difficulty opening containers or bags; fatigue easily and therefore have trouble maintaining a particular posture for a long time [1].

The set-up of a classroom can affect the functioning of a child with these types of difficulties in many ways. Some examples are:

- Tables too close together or too close to the door makes navigation difficult. The child may avoid getting up from their chair to move around or cause disruptions by bumping in to other children or tables when they do.
- Resources that are hard to access – they may be cluttered, not labelled, in hard to open containers or stored in a back corner or behind other objects. The child may avoid getting what they need, take a very long time to do so, or make a mess dropping objects or falling over.
- Tables and chairs of a fixed height without any set-up flexibility. Incorrect seating posture may increase the difficulties for a child with DCD at their workstation and lead to earlier fatigue.
- Poor seating choice for the child. If a child with DCD is located too far from the teacher, required resources and the board, it can impact their performance and motivation.

How can I make my classroom more accessible for a child with DCD?

- Minimise clutter in the classroom - create open spaces and clear pathways for students to move freely around the classroom.

- Provide student with DCD a seat in the classroom that is close to the entry, front of the room and near the resources.
- Provide appropriate seating and desk height, with feet able to be flat on the floor, forearms comfortable on the table.
- Label and create a central space for easily accessible resources, including options for adapted scissors, larger grip pencils, larger print or lines on pages and slanted writing boards.
- Provide easy storage (easy accessible locker or tub at an appropriate height and easily accessible hook for bag).
- Provide flexible options for unpacking of bag e.g. on a flat and sturdy surface such as the table or desk (not at the bag rack or hook).
- Provide chairs and flexible seating options and supports as relevant for sitting on the floor, e.g. a supportive cushion, bucket seat or beanbag.
- Set classroom up with a variety of options for undertaking work, e.g. iPads, computers & whiteboards.
- Provide small whiteboards and whiteboard markers- these assist with easy correction of work.
- Create quiet working spaces that are distraction free by positioning furniture in corners of classroom to create a space that can allow a student to complete their work, without worrying about the distractions around them.

Find out more at dcdaustralia.org.au

References

Missiuna, C., Rivard, L., & Pollock, N. (2004). They're Bright but Can't Write: Developmental Coordination Disorder in School Aged Children. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 1(1), n1.