

# Psychologists and Developmental Coordination Disorder

## What is a psychologist?

A **clinical psychologist** is trained in the assessment and diagnosis of mental illnesses and psychological problems. An **educational and developmental psychologist** is trained to assist with a child's development, behavioural issues, disability-related issues and learning difficulties. A **clinical neuropsychologist** has advanced skills in assessment, diagnosis and treatment planning for disorders affecting the brain.

## What role might a psychologist play in DCD diagnosis?

A neuropsychologist or educational and developmental psychologist can provide an assessment for DCD. An assessment would usually include using standardised assessment tools to measure movement skill of an individual, other testing to exclude other conditions where appropriate, and a developmental history to better understand individual developmental history. They can also assess for the presence of co-occurring developmental conditions.

## What role can a psychologist play in intervention for DCD?

A psychologist would not typically be involved in direct intervention for motor skills, but can assist in other ways. They may provide training to improve cognitive skills (like attention, problem-solving) that can influence the learning of motor skills. They might provide support in the education context, to enhance school performance. Finally, they may provide mental health support to those impacted by DCD.

## How do you find a psychologist?

The Australian Psychological Society website has a 'Find a Psychologist' function, where you can search by expertise and location. See [www.psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist](http://www.psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist)

## What to ask when looking for a psychologist.

This will depend upon the type of psychologist you are looking for and why you are after the service. For assessment, you should ask if the psychologist has experience using standardised movement assessment batteries. For other needs, asking if the psychologist has experience working with those impacted by neurodevelopmental disorders, and DCD specifically, may be helpful.