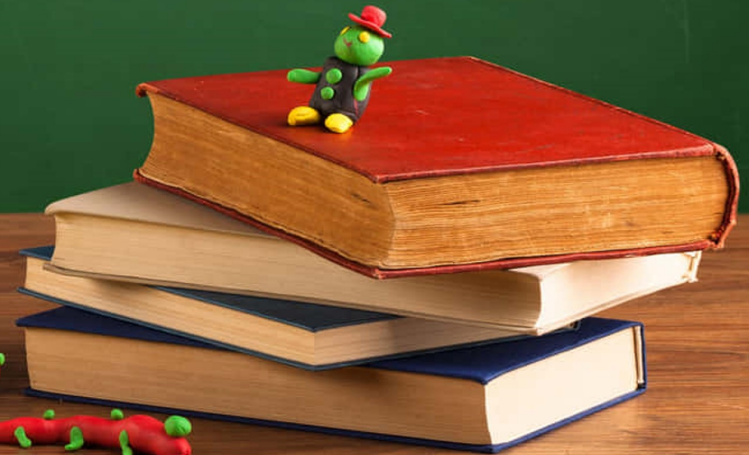


DCD does not impact intelligence...but can significantly impact on school achievement

Top 5 challenges at school:

1. Lack of teacher awareness
2. Fatigue and keeping up in class
3. Making friends and socializing
4. Inclusion in the playground
5. Bullying



DCD can impact many things at school:

- Drawing and writing
- Cutting with scissors
- Turning pages in a book
- Zipping bags and pencil cases
- Opening lunch boxes and wrappers
- Eating
- Walking up and down stairs
- Playing in the playground
- Toileting



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DISORDER
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TIPS for Physical Education Teachers:

- ✓ Work to the child's strengths
- ✓ Break movement skills down
- ✓ Provide instruction (not too many at once)
- ✓ Adapt tasks when necessary
- ✓ Avoid situations of repeated failure
- ✓ **Learn about DCD**



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There needs to be things in
the playground that I can do!



Inclusive playgrounds typically
provide opportunities for:

- ✓ Nature play
- ✓ Imaginative play
- ✓ Sensory play



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Toileting is not easy!



Some motor skills needed to use the toilet:

- removing clothing
- sitting on the toilet
- wiping
- dressing
- washing hands



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Collaboration
between children,
parents, teachers
and therapists is
important



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CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS: HANDWRITING



Why is handwriting hard for a child with fine motor difficulties?

Handwriting relies on a complex set of fine-motor movements, which change along with varying demands on different days, in different writing contexts, and as children progress through the primary school years (e.g. moving from printing to cursive). The same amount of writing for a child with fine motor difficulties requires far more effort than for a child without such difficulties.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS: HANDWRITING



Provide more time

When quality of handwriting is the learning focus or important (e.g. test setting), offer **more time**. This might be needed during tests, for homework, later in the day as fatigue builds or after another challenging motor task.

More time also allows for **rest breaks**, often needed when producing considerable amounts of writing.

But please don't keep a child in at recess or lunch to finish their writing.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS: HANDWRITING



Reduce demands

When quality of handwriting is **NOT** the learning focus, look to reduce the cognitive/physical load by:

- Focus on the information rather than the writing style
- Focus on the quality of the work over quantity
- Embrace technology (see below)
- Use a scribe (pair students)
- Circle every second question on a worksheet and ask them to only complete those
- Ask them to write the specific word they are learning to spell rather than the whole sentence
- Use word-based games like letter tiles for spelling
- Ask the child to spell words aloud rather than write them
- Provide math sheets with the problem already written so they only have to calculate and record the answer

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS: HANDWRITING

Embracing technology

There can be reluctance to use technology as it doesn't 'fix' handwriting quality. But technology can help a student demonstrate their knowledge and progress or when showing signs of fatigue. Consider trying:

- The use of typing, which is often easier to master as the keyboard remains stationary and is predictable
- Dictation or talk-to text (there are math specific dictation apps too to help with equations)
- Apps like SnapType assist students to complete worksheets



CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS: HANDWRITING

Limit multi-tasking

Provide specific checks - "how will you start this task"?

Break down instructions



Provide encouragement

Offer a quiet area to work

Use specific feedback around the rules of handwriting

Provide worksheets to copy from the desk rather than the board

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS: HANDWRITING

Tools that may be useful

- Slant boards
- Pencil grips
- Clip board to stop sheet moving
- Spacing sticks
- Start and stop points
- Paper with raised or coloured lines
- Graph paper for aligning math problems



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NAVIGATING HIGH SCHOOL WITH DCD



TOP TIPS

to transition into high school

1 Start preparing your child for transition process early.

2 Meet with school staff before school begins.

3 Learn the school environment.

Ask to visit - multiple times.

Learn where lockers are, classrooms, toilets

Ask where to find support staff - get to know them

NAVIGATING HIGH SCHOOL WITH DCD



TOP TIPS

to transition into high school

4 Organisational skills: find what works best for your child.

5 Teach and work on time management skills.

6 Teach self-advocacy.
This may take time but this is a skill your child will need increasingly as high school progresses.
It will also be an important lifelong skill.

NAVIGATING HIGH SCHOOL WITH DCD



New accommodations may be needed

High school brings new challenges - Often needing to navigate rooms, lockers, carry lots of books, change clothes for sport and physical education.

You may need to ask for new accommodations.

Extra time to get from class to class (busy high school corridors may need extra management)

Extra time to change in and out of uniform

Help to colour code a school map, timetable and class resources (e.g. everything math related is red)

NAVIGATING HIGH SCHOOL WITH DCD



to transition into high school

- 1** Start preparing your child for transition process early.
- 2** Meet with school staff before school begins.
- 3** Learn the school environment.
 - Ask to visit - multiple times.
 - Learn where lockers, classrooms, and toilets are located.
 - Ask where to find support staff - get to know them.
- 4** Organisational skills: find what works best for your child.
- 5** Teach & practice time management skills.
- 6** Teach self-advocacy.
 - This may take time but this is a skill your child will need increasingly as high school progresses.
 - It will also be an important lifelong skill.

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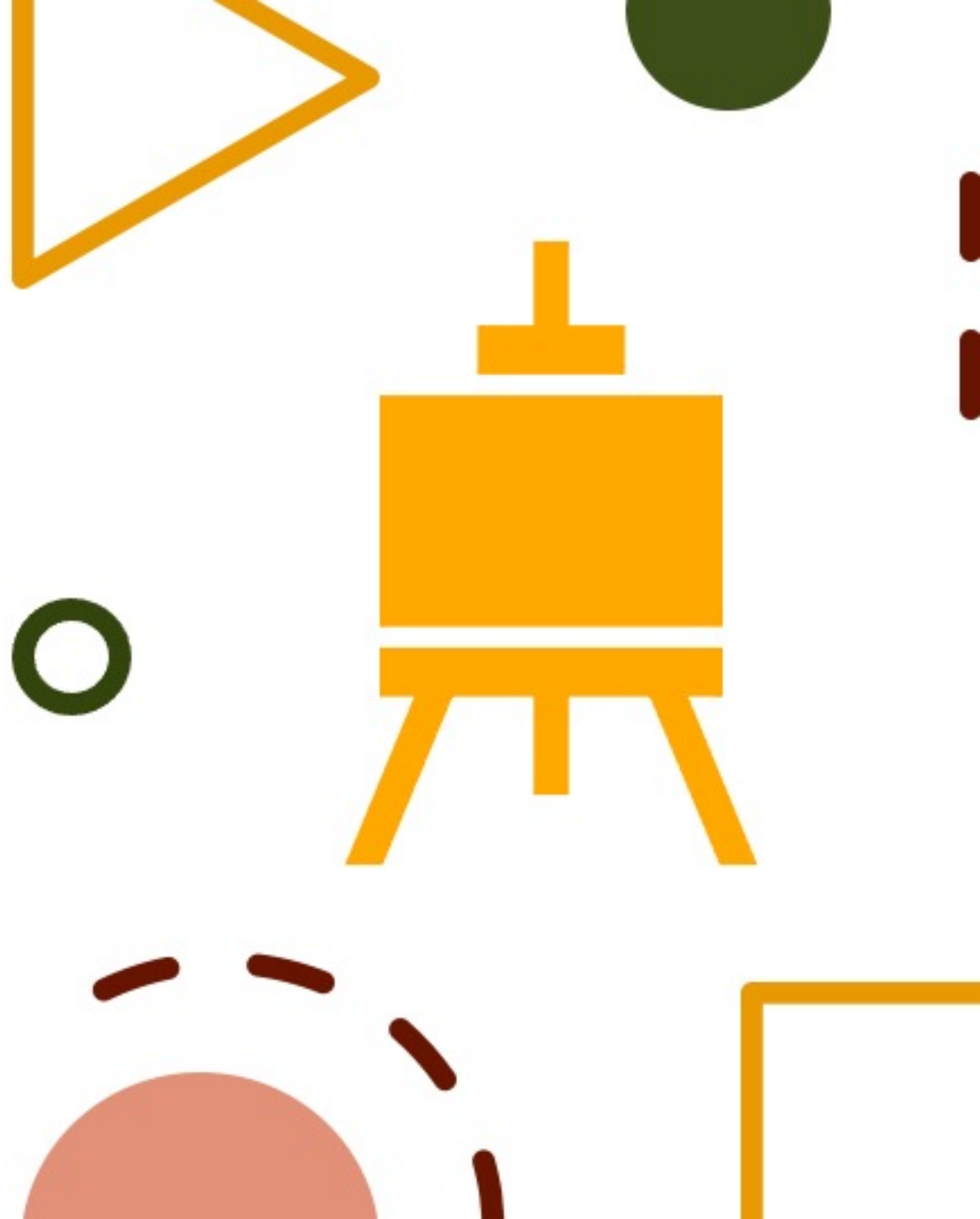
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Extra time to change in and out of uniform.

Help to colour code a school map, timetable and class resources (e.g. everything math related is red).

Art

- **Adaptive Art Tools:**
 - Provide adapted art tools with ergonomic grips.
 - Allow the use of computer programs for digital art.
- **Extended Time:**
 - Give additional time for art projects to accommodate slower fine motor skills.
 - Break complex projects into manageable stages with deadlines.
- **Peer Assistance:**
 - Encourage peer support in setting up and cleaning art materials.



Food Technology



Recipe Modification:

Modify recipes to include pre-chopped or pre-measured ingredients.

Offer step-by-step visual instructions.



Safety Precautions:

Emphasise safety rules and provide extra supervision in the kitchen.

Use adaptive kitchen tools and utensils.



Assistance with Clean-up:

Assign a clean-up partner to help with washing dishes and cleaning up cooking utensils.

Use checklists for post-cooking clean-up tasks.



Mathematics



Modified Worksheets:

- Provide worksheets with enlarged text and clear, uncluttered formatting.
- Offer extra space for calculations.
- Provide grid paper.

Graphing Tools:

- Allow the use of digital graphing software.
- Provide grid paper for drawing graphs.



Music



- **Alternative Instruments:**
 - Offer alternative musical instruments that may be easier to play, such as a keyboard or percussion instruments.
 - Allow digital music composition using software.
- **Extended Practice Time:**
 - Provide additional practice time or extra sessions for music lessons.
 - Break complex musical pieces into smaller, manageable sections.
- **Oral Assessments:**
 - Allow students to discuss the music, its history, and its cultural context orally.
 - Encourage participation in group singing or playing, which can boost confidence.



Science

- **Lab Support:**
 - Provide lab partners to assist with hands-on experiments.
 - Ensure clear, written or verbal instructions for lab procedures.
- **Alternative Assessments:**
 - Offer alternative science projects that emphasise research and presentation skills.
 - Allow oral reports or visual representations instead of written lab reports.
- **Flexible Seating:**
 - Allow the student to use a stool or chair with a backrest in the lab.
 - Ensure that lab equipment is easily accessible.
- **Organisational Tools:**
 - Teach and encourage the use of digital tools for note-taking and organisation.
 - Provide clear labels and storage options for lab equipment and materials.

Technology – Woodwork and Metalwork

- **Assistive Tools:**
 - Provide adaptive tools with ergonomic grips for woodworking projects.
 - Offer clear, step-by-step instructions with visual aids.
- **Safety Precautions:**
 - Emphasise safety rules and provide extra supervision in the workshop.
 - Assign a peer partner for additional support during woodworking/metalworking tasks.

NAVIGATING UNIVERSITY WITH DCD



HOT
TIP

Universities have dedicated staff who assist students with accessibility and inclusion. They will assist you with an individual access plan that provides teaching staff with understanding the accommodations or modifications you need.

NAVIGATING UNIVERSITY WITH DCD



You can still utilise many of the same tools and strategies at university as you did at high school

Digital tools and assistive technology like speech-to-text and cloud based note taking software (you may be able to access university subscriptions to save money).

Colour coding and highlighting key sections of content can help with recall.

Use a diary or calendar app to keep track of class times and due dates.

Talk to the teaching staff about how you learn best and let them know if you are finding things difficult - they may be able to provide key content in alternative formats or help in other ways.

NAVIGATING UNIVERSITY WITH DCD

HOT
TIP



Work with your strengths, build connections with your peers, join a club and try to get involved in uni life. This will help to build your confidence and make it easier to ask for help when you need it!

TEACHING TIPS AND CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

to help children with DCD to shine



TEACHING TIPS AND CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

TO HELP WITH FATIGUE

Fatigue is common in children with DCD, at both a physical and cognitive level

You can help reduce the impact of fatigue by:

- Work with the child to identify comfortable and supportive seating options for mat time and assemblies
- Provide a table for use during mat time if work is happening
- Offer 'easy' tasks when you notice fatigue kick in
- Provide homework flexibility, knowing fatigue has an impact
- Limit multi-tasking and provide time-limits
- Break up tasks involving cutting, drawing and writing
- Offer a quiet space to sit alone if needed
- Work with families on a modified attendance plan if needed

TEACHING TIPS AND CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

THE CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Communication among teachers, school support staff, the child, family and health professionals is vital

You can help create a circle of support by:

- Using collaborative case management to create an IEP
- Support external therapists to attend school and observe the classroom
- Provide transition meetings at the start of the year, ideally including the previous years teacher/s
- Ensure ALL teachers, including specialist, are aware of the child's IEP and are involved in supporting them
- Talk to families about how they want to approach school sports, excursions, camps and other special events

TEACHING TIPS AND CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

SUPPORTING EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Often, those with DCD may also find tasks requiring skills like working memory and planning difficult.

You can help reduce executive function demands by:

- Providing sheets they can copy from on their desk, rather than requiring them to copy information from the board
- Break instructions and tasks down
- Provide specific checks: “how will you start the task?” rather than “do you understand?”
- Provide visual supports
- Provide one-on-one instruction, immediately following group instruction
- Providing a clear structure

TEACHING TIPS AND CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

Some other tips from families based on their experiences

- Enlarge some activities onto A3 paper to allow a greater margin of error
- Use a clipboard to steady papers while working
- Understand that a child may be inconsistent in what they can achieve from day to day
- Provide communication cards or other ways that a child can let you know when they are finding it hard
- Focus on participation and personal bests in physical education

SHOULD MY CHILD WITH DCD PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS CARNIVALS?



Does your child want to participate?

NO

YES

Do they still want to be involved somehow?

Are they confident and happy to participate 'as is'?

NO

YES

YES

NO

Talk to the school about other roles. Can they officiate? Be an organiser? Team helper?

It's important that if this is an event that most of the other students participate in, that conversations are had with the school - the year level coordinator, wellbeing coordinator and/or sports coordinator, so that they understand why your child doesn't want to attend/participate and allow them to offer potential solutions or alternatives.

Go for it!

But always have an exit plan. Ensure they feel safe and supported to withdraw at any point should they change their mind and make sure there is a plan as to who this is communicated to at the event and what will be done to support them.

An emphasis on personal bests rather than on competing against others can also support children with DCD to participate.

**Does the school offer:
Modified events?
Participation-focused events?**

For example, do they provide 'fun' events where the emphasis is on participation, not performance? If your school doesn't, ask why not!



Student-led inclusion initiatives

A powerful way to make the school sports environment more inclusive is to push for student-led change initiatives. If the school has Sports Captains, it could be a great opportunity for the school to involve them in workshopping some ways to make the sport environment more inclusive. They might create buddy systems or set a strong example of the importance of participation over performance through encouragement of others.

Student-led initiatives are often far more successful!