

# Occupational Therapists and Developmental Coordination Disorder



## What is an occupational therapist?

An Occupational Therapist is an allied health professional who focus on supporting and enabling people to participate in activities of everyday life.

## What role might an occupational therapist play in DCD diagnosis?

An Occupational Therapist may support a paediatrician with a diagnosis by identifying key concerns and difficulties a child is having with their motor skills in their daily activities. This can be through formal and informal assessments and involves the therapist providing information on the severity of the motor difficulties and the impact of the motor coordination disorder on the child's daily functioning.

## What role can an occupational therapist play in intervention for DCD?

Occupational therapists are person and family centred taking the person, the activity and the environment all into consideration when working with a client. Occupational Therapy intervention focusses on goal setting related to what the client wants to, needs to and is expected to do, education and skill acquisition. The gold standard intervention is one called Cognitive Orientation to daily occupational performance (CO-OP). This intervention uses a verbal problem solving approach to support children, young people or adults to achieve activities impacted by DCD and enable participation at home, school and community. See this TEDtalk for information about CO-OP <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Au6jwjTB1WI>

## How do you find an occupational therapist?

You can ask your GP or paediatrician for local Occupational Therapist recommendations in your area. Alternatively, have a look at <https://otaus.com.au/find-an-ot> to find an OT near you. Or on ICAN for a CO-OP certified therapist <https://icancoop.myshopify.com/pages/finding-a-certified-therapist#au-nz-instr>

## What to ask when looking for an occupational therapist.

An OT who specialises in working with children and is CO-OP trained would be preferred for a child with DCD.