

Script for ANL Webinar (Dyspraxia).

Before I start Just check if you all can see my screen and that they can hear me?

Thanks, Claire, good evening, I am Grace and like Claire I am an early year's practitioner. I would like to discuss with you an Additional Learning Need disorder that I have struggled with every day of my life. I was diagnosed with Dyspraxia at an early age which is also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD). I will discuss how this condition is identified and diagnosed and the impact of some of barriers with this Additional learning need and the support that is given to children and their families.

Dyspraxia is a neurological and developmental disorder of poor motor coordination, with difficulty learning motor skills than other children their own age. this affects 1 in 20 primary age children and is often identified more in boys than girls (Health direct ,2025).

In addition, NHS states that Dyspraxia is a condition that affects physical co-ordination which causes delays in children development, and them perform less well in daily tasks than other children of the age, children may appear to be clumsier, and these problems often continue into adulthood.

However, the cause of Dyspraxia is unknow, but the NHS suggests that children are more likely to have Dyspraxia genetic if there is a family history, baby born premature and a birth wight less then 4 pounds (NHS,2023).

Not all individuals with Dyspraxia have the same symptoms, but it often impacts and affects fine motor and gross motor skills and coordination which may cause frequent falls or trips.

Difficult in Balancing, jumping, hopping and postural control are challenging to achieve, . It also impacts children's hand-eye-coordination which affects skills such as playing ball, drawing and climbing . Usually, children with Dyspraxia may find carrying out multiple actions that need doing simultaneously or sequencing difficult. Some struggle with tying shoes laces or learning to ride a bicycle making physical developmental milestones a difficult for children to achieve (SASC,2010).

Also, they might find it challenging to develop pencil skills or using scissors and find it hard to carry out self-care routines such as getting dressed and eating. These are some of the core symptoms of Dyspraxia, however, children with Dyspraxia may also have difficulty with organizational skills, lowered self –esteem, poor social skills and find it hard to play with others and interact.

Also having sensory sensitivity, poor spatial awareness. But children with Dyspraxia share some positive traits such as being creative, capable of thinking outside the box and seeing the bigger picture (The Codpast ,no date).

The diagnosis and testing

There is no test for Dyspraxia, but the disorder is diagnosed by a team of medical professionals ranging from a paediatrician, physical therapist, child psychologist who will assess the child 's overall development and assess their fine and gross motor skills. However, the signs of Dyspraxia are displayed from an early age, these signs can be easily missed as children develop at different rates and stages,

because of this the diagnosis does not happen until the age of 5 years old or possible older (Cleveland Clinic ,2025).

There are many barriers in supporting children with Dyspraxia in early years education. The main issue that will be discuss is a social model barrier of this disability.

Early year's practitioners lack of awareness, understanding and training in this condition which can cause delayed in children being diagnosis this issue will course the child in not having the support that is needed and missed opportunities for early intervention. Supporting this Cairney et al 2011 stated that limited understanding of how to identify children with Dyspraxia from education and parents and how to make accommodations and support the needs of these children. With unmet needs children with Dyspraxia often go on to develop mental health and secondary physical challenges (Cheryl et al 2012). Similarly, Purcell et al, (2024) highlighted that Dyspraxia in a wider society is less well understood by teachers, health professionals and the general public. This frustration about the lack of professional awareness has driven parents to raise awareness of this condition. Hunt et al's ,2020 research results suggest that professionals have poor awareness of Dyspraxia and the social and psychological effect

of this condition, 82% of teachers in the research believed that they should play part in identifying early warning signs of this disorder. However, the training for Dyspraxia is hard to find and not recognised as priority. The support and resources are available, but they are not always accessible or to the specific child's needs and early years settings lack funding for practitioners to attend training courses (NHS,2023). Leading to the early year practitioner having less confidence and unprepared to support children with the ALN affecting the child's development, this lack of confidence impacting on the practitioner's wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Additionally, Cwlwm (no,date) highlight the fact that the ALN code and act does not require any additional training for early years settings, the Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (ALNLO) should make sure that the practitioners are supported by putting systems or arrangements in place to develop the practitioners skills and knowledge of ALN. which might help practitioners to identify the signs of children with ALN and put support and intervention in place. The demands on the ALNCO have increased with workload and responsibilities as many ALNCO's are also leaders or teachers reducing the time that they have to support children with ALN and other practitioners (Welsh government ,2024).

The Welsh governments scoping report of the additional learning needs system states that early years settings and health practitioners and local authorities need to widen professional knowledge and learning opportunities. Educational practitioners have some access to training, but other settings are faced with barriers in accessing training and professional development (Welsh Government ,2023).

Resulting in possible delayed in diagnosing children in the early years which can impact their health and wellbeing and lead to long- and short-term health problems. Delays in gross motor milestones may affect children with Dyspraxia physical fitness (Castellucci and Singla 2024). As well as mental health problems which can have a major impact on the child as a whole affecting their holistic development and well-being. (Local Government ,2024).

To reduce this barrier there needs to be training for practitioners about Dyspraxia through integrating awarenesses of this disorder by incorporating it into ALN especially Dyspraxia into the mandatory child development training programs. This will make sure that all early year's practitioners regardless of their role or level will understand Dyspraxia and the impact it has for children, know how to support the needs and development so that the child is able to successfully participate in the foundation stage of learning (Department of education, 2023). Early years child development training offers free, your own pace online modules that look at and cover a wide range of aspects of child development which includes supporting children's individual differences and needs (Department of education, 2023).

Furthermore, working in collaboration in partnership with health care professionals such as occupational therapists to provide support and guidance using an approach such as Partnering for change (P4C) (Klein et al 2023) highlighted that this approach has displayed success in building this skill and knowledge through working in partnership between teachers and therapists.

The Welsh government provide funding to Early Childhood settings which is called the Additional support Grant (ASG) this will help children with ALN access the childcare. However, 67% of Welsh settings have never heard of ASG before. In 2021-22 Welsh government spent £1.1million across 22 local authorities in Wales. Which local authorities have welcomed due to the growing needs for children with ALN, which both families and settings have said that ASG funding has had a positive impact on the children it has helped and supported children families and it was reported that children have made progress allowing them to meet their key milestones (Welsh Government 2024).

In Conclusion, children with Dyspraxia are still facing challenges in the early years may be due to a lack of awareness and confusion from early practitioners and professionals between the (DCD) and Dyspraxia and not knowing that they are the same disorder. This lack of awareness is causing missed and delayed diagnosis. Which impacts not only on child learning and physical development but also their social skills, confidence and long-term mental health. However, despite these barriers there are strategies that

can make a real difference including incorporating Dyspraxia awareness into early years training and early years settings accessing the funding such as Additional Support Grant. We must raise the awareness and improve the knowledge of this disorder so children can overcome their difficulties and thrive to reach their full potential

Thanks for listening I am open to any questions you may have.

How do you support a child with Dyspraxia to Develop in the early years setting?

There are many effective strategies to help and support children with Dyspraxia which aim to provide guidance to children and their families, assessment, intervention.

Having information from occupational therapies this intervention will help, and support children develop fine motor skills and help to manage sensory processing issues and physiotherapy to support children with gross motor skills which includes balance and coordination (NHS ,2025).

In the education sector in Wales children with Dyspraxia are required to have an individual development plan (IDP) which outlines the support needed for the child to make progress in their learning and development (Swansea council ,2023). Smart move motor skill development programme many schools around the UK use this program to support Dyspraxia children.

outline with early signs of Dyspraxia through this screen tool. These physical activities can be differentiated to each child's ability (Smart.2018). A comprehensive school in Wales as well as using the smart move they have handwriting support (Cynffig comprehensive school, no date). In addition, Swansea Bay university health (no, date) board offer therapeutic support for children that have this disorder which is a program that helps and meets the children to develop motor skills in their day to day life.

What service are there in Wales to support families with children that have Dyspraxia?

They may service to support families with children with Dyspraxia

Snap Cymru provide support families the give training, one to one support and advice for families of children with ALN including Dyspraxia this website also support and help parent to understand and navigate IDP and systems that are in school (Snap Cymru, no date). In addition, contact Cymru support families by offering workshop, emotional support and helplines for support and guidance that covering topics such as managing behaviour understanding Dyspraxia and help with financial support for families of ALN Children (Contact ,2025).

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