

DEVELOPMENTAL COORDINATION DISORDER (DCD)



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DEFINITION:

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) is defined as marked impairment in the development of motor coordination. The diagnosis is made only if this impairment significantly interferes with academic achievement or activities of daily living. The diagnosis is made if the coordination difficulties are not due to a general medical condition (i.e., cerebral palsy, hemiplegia, muscular dystrophy) and the criteria are not met for Pervasive Developmental Disorder. The manifestations of this disorder vary with age and development.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Young children with DCD may display clumsiness, delays in achieving motor milestones such as sitting, crawling, walking, tying shoelaces, and buttoning shirts.

Older children with DCD may display difficulties with motor aspects such as assembling puzzles, playing ball, printing or handwriting.

Approximately 6% of children ranging in age from 5 to 11 years have DCD.

Recognition of DCD usually occurs when the child first attempts such tasks as running, holding a knife and fork, buttoning clothes or playing ball games. In some cases, lack of coordination continues through adulthood.

CONSIDERATIONS AND TEACHING TIPS:

- Check the student's record to eliminate the existence of specific neurological disorders.
- If mental retardation is present, eliminate motor difficulties typically associated with mental retardation before assessing for DCD.
- Task analyzes the areas that are deficient.
- Teach motor skills using component parts.
- Maintain a high motivational climate in which predisposes students to be successful.
- Use tactile balls to facilitate success in catching tasks.

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.