

Who can make a diagnosis?

An educational psychologist or specialist teacher usually carries out the assessment to diagnose dyscalculia. Rarely, assessment by health professionals may give a diagnosis of “mathematics disorder.

What are the benefits of diagnosis?

A diagnosis of dyscalculia can help both parents and teaching staff better understand the needs of the child as a learner. Dyscalculia is a specific learning difficulty and diagnosis may entitle the child to special arrangements in public examinations such as extra time. Dyscalculia is less well understood by teachers in schools and colleges and diagnosis can lead to improved awareness and training.

FIVE-MINUTE GUIDES

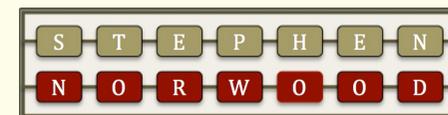
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happylearners.info

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A Five-Minute Guide to Dyscalculia



What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a type of learning difficulty where individuals struggle with basic mathematical concepts and performing arithmetical calculations. The condition can be diagnosed when there are no other global issues affecting learning. It is therefore what is known as a specific learning difficulty. Dyscalculia can also be known as Mathematics Disorder.

How does dyscalculia affect learning

Each child is different and the severity and specific difficulties experienced will vary. The following are a range of symptoms typically associated with dyscalculia:

- Delay in counting
- Difficulty in understanding relationships between numbers such as place value
- Delay in ability to apply comparative vocabulary such as greater than, less than; biggest, smallest; and most, least etc.
- Poor understanding of time concepts
- Delay in mastering number bonds and multiplication facts
- Slow to learn mathematical formulae
- Difficulty with sequencing
- Difficulty with multi-step calculations and problems
- Anxiety and poor self-esteem in maths lessons

These difficulties can impact in learning other than mathematics lessons.

How common is dyscalculia?

About 3-6% of the population are affected by dyscalculia. It affects both boys and girls equally.

How do you support children with dyscalculia?

Individuals with dyscalculia struggle with mastering arithmetical concepts but can often be unaffected in their understanding of more complex mathematical ideas. It is important in older children to avoid difficulties with basic concepts becoming a barrier to accessing the wider maths curriculum. Children can be supported by

- Overlearning of basic maths skills
- Multi-sensory approaches that enable the child to experience the same mathematical concept in different ways
- Access to visual aids such as number squares and multiplication tables
- Access completed examples of calculations and formulae
- Task boards that break down each step involved in the problem or calculation
- Access to calculators to perform the arithmetical part of maths problems
- Encouragement to use informal jottings to help them record their thinking processes during calculations
- Giving the answers to sums so the focus is on the methodology rather than solving the calculation
- Positive encouragement and praise to avoid anxiety and boost self-esteem

Why do some children develop dyscalculia?

Why some people develop dyscalculia is poorly understood. However, like dyslexia there is a tendency for it to run in families. It is also more likely to occur in individuals with dyslexia and in children with weak working memory. Dyscalculia is also more common in children with ADHD.