

This resource was developed by the DCD research team from the Institute of Health Research at the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle.

## Beth Hands

Professor Beth Hands (BEd(PhysEd), BSocWk, GradDipEdStudies; MEd, PhD) has been involved in research involving children and adolescents for over three decades. Her particular research focus involves health-related issues affecting children and adolescents with Developmental Coordination Disorder and other movement disorders. She is currently a Senior Research Fellow with the Institute for Health Research at the University of Notre Dame. She has published numerous peer-reviewed journals and book chapters and authored the highly regarded Fundamental Movement

## Tegan Grace

Dr Tegan Grace (BSci (Hons), PhD) is an early career researcher, with a strong interest in the influence of early life events during pregnancy and childhood on long term development. Her PhD focussed on the antenatal, perinatal and neonatal periods and the impact of events during this time on motor coordination and neuromuscular development in late childhood and adolescence. Tegan is a Research Fellow with the Institute for Health Research at the University of Notre Dame and has published in high quality journals and received local, national and international recognition

# DCD Developmental Coordination Disorder

A resource for parents, teachers and clinicians



**COLLABORATIVE  
RESEARCH  
NETWORK**

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## What is DCD?

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) is a diagnosable condition where a person's motor coordination is below what would be expected for their age. This movement difficulty is not due to another neurological disorder, visual impairment, or intellectual disability, but may co-occur with other disorders. It is a quite common, yet under recognised, disorder affecting between 5- 15% of the population and is evident across the lifespan. People with DCD have difficulties with many movements, not only those related to sport. Their ability to efficiently complete many activities of daily living such as getting dressed, tying shoe laces, putting on makeup or driving a car is also affected.

It is important that teachers, parents and clinicians are aware of the condition and develop strategies to help people improve their motor skills, increase confidence, and find ways to enjoy being physically active. This resource is designed to provide information about DCD for parents,

teachers, clinicians and the broader community in order to increase knowledge and recognition of the condition so that early intervention and support can be provided. Community awareness is very important as DCD is currently under-recognised and under-supported in Australia and many other countries.

## What does DCD look like?

DCD may affect both small and large movements. A teacher may observe in the classroom a student who is often bumping into furniture, having difficulty with writing and letter formation or is easily distracted and disorganised. A Physical Education teacher may notice a student who has an uncoordinated or awkward run and jump, difficulty with catching and throwing a ball, and an unwillingness to participate. Parents often mention their son or daughter needs extra time to get dressed and organised for school in the mornings, or has difficulty using their knife and fork, tying shoelaces or riding a bike.

## What is the impact of DCD?

Quite often people with DCD will shy away from opportunities to be physically active. This can put them at risk of a range of poor physical health outcomes such as reduced fitness, including cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, and muscle strength, as well as lower bone density. In addition individuals with DCD often report lower self-esteem and confidence, poor self-perceptions across a range of domains, social isolation and higher levels of anxiety and stress.

## How we can help?

**IN PRINT:** Our book DCD: A Resource for parents, teachers and clinicians is a comprehensive guide to DCD. It includes background information on DCD, what it looks like and how it can affect schooling, home life and social development. We have developed a way of supporting

children and adolescents with DCD, called the 5C's Approach. Grace, T. & Hands, B. (2017) Developmental Coordination Disorder: A resource for parents, teachers and clinicians. Perth, WA: University of Notre Dame

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**ONLINE:** The website [movegrowengage.com.au](http://movegrowengage.com.au) is dedicated to information and research around DCD. You can find out about current research projects, collaborations and publications available for health researchers and practitioners, as well as useful information on intervention programs for a range of age groups.

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**IN VIDEO:** Our online film DCD: Need to confirm the title of the film here is a short clip that includes interviews with experts, as well as interviews with parents and teenagers with DCD. Put the URL for the video her.

