

DYSCALCULIA

What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a specific learning disorder that is characterised by impairments in learning basic arithmetic facts, processing numerical magnitude and performing accurate and fluent calculations.

A person with dyspraxia may:

- Have difficulty counting backwards
- Have difficulty remembering basic facts despite hours of learning
- Have no mathematical strategies other than counting
- Have difficulty understanding place value and the role of zero
- Have no sense of whether answers obtained are right or nearly right
- Use addition as default operation and avoid others
- Avoid tasks that are difficult
- Have weak mental arithmetic skills
- Have high levels of maths anxiety
- Be slower to perform calculations
- Have a poor sense of number & estimation
- Forget mathematical procedures eg, long division

Top Tips

- ✓ Differentiate activities so students are able to access the tasks and develop confidence
- ✓ Allow extra time for activities
- ✓ Use written rather than verbal instructions. Dyscalculic children are spending a lot of mental energy understanding maths, the last thing they need is to memorise instructions
- ✓ Give 1:1 support where you can. Try to 'check in' at the start of each activity
- ✓ Start at level student is comfortable with so they can feel some success
- ✓ Provide a lot of practice for new skills/ concepts
- ✓ Question to get the student engaged
- ✓ Make learning as active and 'fun' as possible. Eg use card games or computer games to start a new concept
- ✓ Instruct on how to count in an organised and meaningful way
- ✓ Provide number lines
- ✓ Use wipeable boards to teach place value
- ✓ Use images and symbols
- ✓ Use fraction walls to support with learning fractions
- ✓ Encourage highlighting for worded problems
- ✓ Students may find drawing shapes difficult. Support by drawing dots to join up

Useful Websites

<http://www.aboutdyscalculia.org/teachers.html>

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/dyscalculia>