

## Education

Most children with DVD go to their local school. Some go to schools that can offer more speech and language therapy and specialist teaching. Children with DVD may also have difficulty with reading, spelling and handwriting. They may need support from occupational therapy and educational psychology services.

## Developmental coordination disorder

Many children who have speech difficulties, as a result of DVD, have the same kind of difficulties with other motor skills such as handwriting or running. This is called generalised dyspraxia or developmental coordination disorder (DCD).

## Local contact details

Details of your local speech and language therapy service are available from your GP.

## Hospital contact details

Address: Nuffield Speech Clinic,  
Royal National Throat Nose  
and Ear Hospital  
330 Grays Inn Road,  
London. WC1X 8DA

Telephone: 020 3456 5235  
Website: [www.uclh.nhs.uk](http://www.uclh.nhs.uk)

## Where can I get more information?

### Afasic

Website: [www.afasicengland.org.uk](http://www.afasicengland.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0845 355577

### Apraxia Kids

Website: [www.apraxia-kids.org](http://www.apraxia-kids.org)

### Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' policy statement on DVD (2011)

Website: <http://www.ndp3.org/documents/rcslt2011dvdPolicyStatement.pdf>

### Dyspraxia Foundation

Website: [www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)  
Helpline: 01462 454986

UCLH cannot accept responsibility for information provided by external organisations.

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First published: February 2014  
Last review date: February 2014  
Next review date: February 2016  
Leaflet code: UCLH/SH/RNTNEH/NSC/DVD01  
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Created by Medical Illustration RNTNEH 020 3456 5103 Unique Code: 29030

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## Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital

## Developmental verbal dyspraxia

### Nuffield Speech Clinic

This information leaflet has been given to you to help answer some of the questions you may have about Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia (also known as Childhood Apraxia of Speech). If you do have any concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a speech and language therapist or doctor caring for your child.

## What is developmental verbal dyspraxia?

Developmental verbal dyspraxia (DVD) is a speech sound disorder which affects children's ability to learn and coordinate movements for speech.

Children with DVD have difficulty making speech sounds correctly and joining them in the right order to say syllables, words and sentences. This causes very limited or unclear speech.

The causes of DVD are not fully understood and cannot be identified in most children. Often there are other family members who have had speech difficulties. This suggests that in some children DVD may be inherited. Some children have DVD as part of another medical condition.

## How can I find out if my child has DVD?

There are many reasons why a child may be slow to develop speech or have unclear speech. DVD is actually quite rare. A speech and language therapist with experience of children's speech sound disorders is able to assess and diagnose DVD. A definite diagnosis of DVD cannot be given for very young children or for children who are not saying many words. This is because diagnosis is based on speech characteristics.

## Why is speech so difficult for these children?

Speech is a very complex process. Children with DVD have difficulty creating accurate movement plans to control the muscles of the lips, tongue, palate (which directs air through the mouth or the nose) breathing and voice, to make speech sounds.

Young children may have difficulty saying individual sounds and syllables. They will have to learn to sequence and join sounds in words. Children with DVD often say a word clearly one minute, but can't say it clearly moments later.

Once they can say words accurately, they may still find it difficult to keep their speech accurate when talking in sentences. Older children may still need help to learn to say new longer words, like "photosynthesis" and "archaeology" which they need for school topics.

## What helps children with DVD?

- Speech and language therapy

Most children with DVD are able to develop clear speech, with the right help. They will usually need a high level of direct therapy from a qualified speech and language therapist (SLT) over a number of years. How much therapy a child needs and how often, depends on how severe their speech difficulty is, their age and rate of progress.

A therapy programme will be devised by the SLT to meet a child's individual needs. Therapy will include activities to develop accurate movements for speech and also to develop a complete sound system. Skills will be developed in small steps with lots of practice and revision. Therapy may also include work on other areas of language and related skills such as attention and listening.

- Plenty of practice

School staff and families are crucial to the success of therapy, by practicing targets every day, as directed by the SLT.

- Support for communication

It can take several years for a child to learn to speak clearly. Your SLT will advise on the best way to help your child get his message across. Many children use gesture or signing, or a picture communication book. Parents and school staff can use a home school book to pass on details of things the child may want to talk about.

Computer based communication aids are also available.

- Patience and encouragement

Children with DVD need adults around them to make time to listen to them, and give them plenty of encouragement and praise for trying with their speech. It is better not to correct their speech unless your SLT advises this.