

## Understanding Aspects of SEND: Dyscalculia

**1. What is Dyscalculia?** Dyscalculia is a specific learning difficulty that primarily affects an individual's ability to understand and work with numbers. Often referred to as "number dyslexia," it impacts skills such as arithmetic, time management and understanding mathematical concepts. Dyscalculia is a neurological condition and can vary widely in severity. With the right support, individuals with dyscalculia can develop effective coping strategies and succeed in various areas of life. About 6% of people have dyscalculia. (British Dyslexia Association)

**2. How can Dyscalculia present?** The presentation of dyscalculia differs among individuals but commonly includes:

- **Difficulty with basic maths:** Struggling with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- **Number sense challenges:** Difficulty understanding quantities, number patterns or the relationship between numbers.
- **Time management issues:** Trouble reading clocks, estimating time or sticking to schedules.
- **Spatial awareness difficulties:** Problems understanding maps, directions or spatial arrangements.
- **Struggles with measurement:** Difficulty with money management, measuring objects or understanding units.
- **Memory challenges:** Forgetting mathematical rules, formulas or sequences.
- **Anxiety:** Fear or avoidance of math-related tasks due to repeated struggles or low confidence.

**3. Ways to help manage Dyscalculia** Supporting individuals with dyscalculia involves using tailored strategies and tools to reduce frustration and build confidence. Key approaches include:

- **Use concrete tools:** Employ visual aids like number lines, counters and diagrams to make abstract concepts tangible.
- **Incorporate technology:** Use apps, calculators and software designed for maths support to assist with problem-solving.
- **Simplify instructions:** Break down tasks into small, clear steps and use consistent language to explain concepts.

- **Provide hands-on learning:** Use real-world examples, such as cooking or shopping, to teach mathematical concepts.
- **Encourage repetition:** Revisit key skills frequently to reinforce learning and improve retention.
- **Build confidence:** Focus on strengths, celebrate progress and provide positive reinforcement.

#### 4. Where to Find Out More

- **British Dyslexia Association** ([www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)): Provides information on dyscalculia alongside other learning differences.
- **Understood.org** ([www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)): Shares practical strategies and support for children with math-related learning difficulties.
- **National Numeracy** ([www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk](http://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk)): Explanation of dyscalculia with tips and guidance.
- **Dyscalculia.org** ([www.dyscalculia.org](http://www.dyscalculia.org)): Offers resources, tools and guidance for individuals with dyscalculia.
- Book recommendations:
  - [\*The Dyscalculia Toolkit\* by Ronit Bird](#)
  - [\*The Dyscalculia Assessment: A complete teacher assessment tool for identifying maths difficulties\* by Jane Emerson and Patricia Babbie](#)