



Report Summary

What is Impact for DCD?

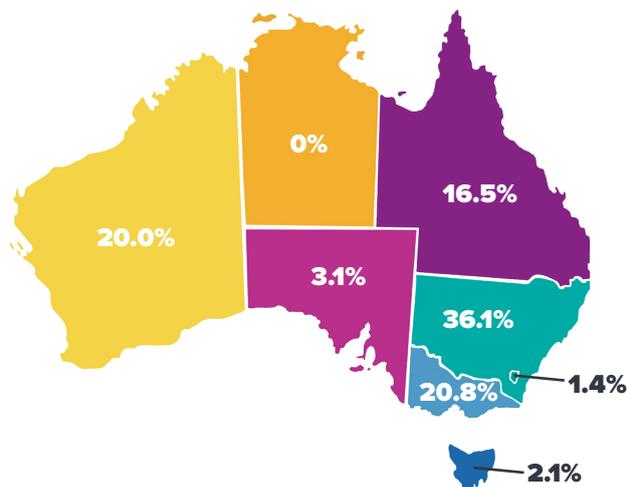
Impact for DCD is the largest survey conducted to identify the challenges experienced by children with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) and their families. This national survey conducted in Australia examined challenges relating to five domains: **diagnosis**, **activity and participation**, **education**, **therapy**, and **social and emotional health**.



The survey was held online in 2018-2019.

Who took part in the survey?

Responses were received in relation to 443 children across Australia aged 4-18 years. The cohort was 73.5% male.



What did the Impact for DCD report tell us about diagnosis?

- Many children are not receiving a diagnosis until **two to four years** after seeking help.
- There is no consistent terminology or standardised practice for the diagnosis of DCD in Australia.
- **87% of parents** reported that receiving a diagnosis was helpful but were frustrated by inconsistent and inaccurate labelling.
- The survey found **nine separate diagnostic terms** used and more children were diagnosed with dyspraxia than with the correct clinical diagnosis of DCD.

What did we learn about Activity and Participation?

- The top five activities parents reported as being most difficult for their child were: dressing, eating using utensils, self-care, drawing/writing and using scissors.
- **Most families (84%)** reported that their child was more tired at the end of the day than other children.
- **Half of the families (49%)** reported their child did not enjoy physical activity.
- **61% of parents** were concerned about the impact their child's movement difficulties were having on their physical health.

What were the findings in the area of Education?

- **82% of parents** felt their movement difficulties were negatively impacting their education.
- The top **five greatest challenges** at school were: teacher awareness of the condition, fatigue and keeping up in class, making friends and socialising, inclusion in the playground, and bullying.
- **Most parents** reported that their child's learning needs were not being met.

- One in four parents reported that their child did not enjoy going to school.
- **86% of parents** were concerned about how their child's movement difficulties may impact their ability to successfully complete their schooling.

What did the report tell us about Therapy and Intervention?

- Most families had accessed therapy for their children, typically on a weekly or fortnightly basis.
- The most common services accessed were: occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychology, physiotherapy and specialist exercise services.
- **Two out of three families** reported that they did not feel the current level of therapy was sufficient.
- **58% of families** do not have access to funding to support the cost of therapy.
- **53% of families** reported that the cost of therapy caused financial strain.
- **Cost was a major limiting factor** for families who had not access therapy for their children.

What did we learn about the area of Social and Emotional Health?

- **92% of parents** were concerned about the impact their child's movement difficulty were having on their social and emotional health.
- **Two thirds of children** scored in the clinically concerning ranges for emotional symptoms and peer problems.
- **8% of families** reported that their child had expressed suicidal thoughts.
- **74% of parents** reported that their child's movement difficulties always or very often caused them emotional concern.
- **78% of parents** were concerned about their child's future.

What were the report's key recommendations?

Based on the findings of the Impact for DCD survey and considering the priority areas identified by families, the following key recommendations were developed in collaboration with both family and professional reference groups.

- **Adoption of a standardised practice** for the diagnosis of DCD in Australia.
- **Utilisation of the correct diagnostic term**, being DCD.
- **Identifying children as 'at risk' of DCD** before five to enable early intervention to commence.
- **Increased used of evidence-based strategies** that are based on comprehensive needs assessment.
- **Education across Australia** to recognise DCD as a disorder affecting a student's ability to reach their full potential and to provide appropriate provisions and support.
- **Awareness and education campaigns** for teachers and educators about DCD.
- **Development of resources** to assist teachers and educators making schooling more accessible and enjoyable for children with DCD.
- **Schools funded** to include screening measures to evaluate movement as part of on entry evaluations during the first year of schooling.
- **Education for families** about signs of poor mental health and the services available to support themselves and their child.
- **Support for further research** to improve ground level support to children and their families.

Ultimately, we hope this report will be the first step to shape a new future for people living with Developmental Coordination Disorder.

Read the full report at telethonkids.org.au/impactforDCD
or dcdaustralia.org.au/impact-for-dcd-initiative



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