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**Brooke Weston Trust**



## Brooke Weston Trust Primary SEND Newsletter

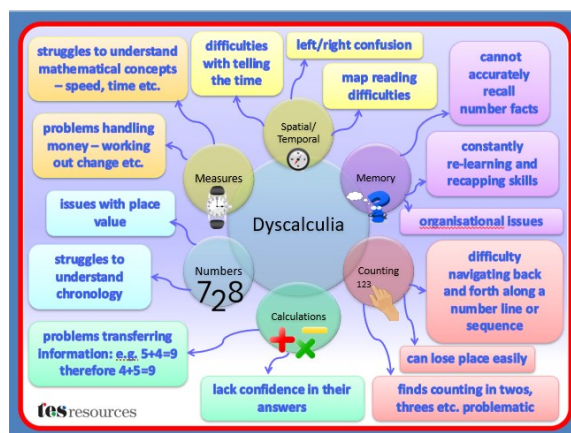
Welcome to the March SEND newsletter. This month's newsletter is all about understanding dyscalculia. We hope you find the information useful. If you have any questions please contact your child's class teacher or SENDCO at your school who will be more than willing to discuss anything with you.

### What is Dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty in using numbers. This difficulty causes a wide range of other mathematical struggles. It can occur alongside other specific learning difficulties, maths anxiety and medical conditions. Around 5% of people have dyscalculia, occurring across all ages and abilities. 60% of people with dyslexia also have mathematical difficulties.

### Indicators of Dyscalculia

- Difficulties learning to count forwards and backwards.
- Difficulty connecting a number to the amount of items it represents, for example '5' stands for 5 dogs, 5 fingers or 5 apples etc.
- Difficulty learning and recalling basic number facts, such as number bonds and times tables.
- Difficulties when trying to recognise small numbers of objects without counting (for example, numbers on a dice or eggs left in a box).
- Use their fingers to support simple addition and subtraction - they have not been able to move onto mental methods.
- Confusion between the signs +, -, x and ÷ and what they symbolise.
- Difficulties recognising patterns or sequencing numbers.
- A need for support to identify place value and the value of a digit in a certain position.
- Making sense of money and working out total costs can be tricky.
- Difficulty telling the time on an analogue clock.
- Difficulty understanding how graphs and charts work, requiring help to interpret the data.
- Difficulties with directions, differentiating left and right and may have poor visual and spatial orientation.
- The child may have high levels of maths anxiety, which can worsen with age.



## How can you support Dyscalculia?

- Allow extra time. A child with dyscalculia may need additional time to complete tasks.
- Use concrete apparatus. Pupils with dyscalculia often find it helpful to use concrete apparatus instead of relying on printed resources and verbal teaching. This allows them to have a more kinaesthetic, or hands on, approach to their learning. Ensure all children have access to counting blocks, rulers, clock faces etc.
- Give frequent praise, rewards and encouragement. Some children with dyscalculia may be embarrassed and frustrated by their difficulties. You can help to motivate them and make them feel proud of their progress by offering praise, rewards and encouragement for small steps of achievement.
- Repetition, repetition, repetition. Children with dyscalculia may need to learn the same concept or procedure over and over again before they begin to understand it. Reinforce ideas and concepts by using a multisensory approach to teaching.

## How to deal with Maths Anxiety

Maths anxiety tends to get worse as a child gets older, so deal with it as soon as you can. Make sure that you keep a positive mindset about maths and ensure that you're not giving signals to them about any negative feelings or anxiety you have about it. They'll pick up on this very quickly and then it will be more difficult for you to undo the damage this causes.

Talk to your child openly about their difficulties so that they can see you are validating their feelings. Use the word 'dyscalculia' so that they know it is a recognised condition. Deal with comments such as "I'm stupid!" with both truth and kindness. Explain that they have a difficulty in a certain area which might make them feel this way. Tell them that you and their teacher will work together to provide lots of ways to help them increase their skills and knowledge.

Teach your child some anxiety management strategies so they can deal with their feelings more effectively. Get them to acknowledge these feelings and give them a repertoire of activities to manage them, such as slow breathing, muscle relaxation, meditation and mindfulness colouring.

## Useful References

British Dyslexia Association—<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyscalculia#:~:text=What%20is%20Dyscalculia%3F,across%20all%20ages%20and%20abilities>

National Numeracy—<https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/news/what-dyscalculia-and-how-can-it-be-spotted-and-supported-children-and-adults>

Dyscalculia Association—<http://www.dyscalculiaassociation.uk/>

The Schools SEND information report can be found at : <https://www.oakleyvaleprimary.org/page/?title=Equalities%2FSEND&pid=49>

The Local Offer can be found at: <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/send/local-offer/Pages/default.aspx>

If you have any questions your SENCO at Oakley Vale is Becky Annetts and can be contacted on [rebecca.annetts@oakleyvaleprimary.org](mailto:rebecca.annetts@oakleyvaleprimary.org) or via the school office.

Next months newsletter will focus on Sensory Circuits