

DYSCALCULIA

PART 1

“I find it so hard. Numbers terrify me so I spend most of the lesson just keeping my head down and hoping the teacher won’t notice me.”

Jill. Age 12.



What it is

The word dyscalculia is made up of “dys” = difficulty, and calculus = counting stone. Thus, dyscalculia refers to a difficulty with arithmetic. It should be noted that there is, currently, far less research in this area than for other SpLD.

Therefore, agreed definitions of dyscalculia are more difficult to find.

The DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed., American Psychiatric Association, 2013) *recommends a diagnosis of developmental dyscalculia when “mathematical ability, as measured by individually administered standardised tests, is substantially below that expected given the person’s chronological age, measured intelligence and age-appropriate education.”*

What it means

In general, we would expect to see:

- problems with counting from a given point;
- confusion with number direction (92 or 29);
- challenge remembering how numbers are written;
- challenge understanding mathematical symbols;
- challenges with the concept of space and/or direction;

- takes a long time to complete mathematical tasks;
- problems with estimating;
- problems with the planning of activities;
- poor memory for basic maths facts;
- high levels of debilitating anxiety related to maths;
- problems with orientation/direction;
- mixing up similar looking numbers;
- a poor understanding of place value and its use in calculations;
- problems remembering shapes;
- problems counting backwards;
- poor concept of time and reading analogue clocks/watches;
- inability to subitise.



To be continued...