

What is Dyscalculia?

Parent Fact Sheet

Dyscalculia is a specific learning difficulty that affects number understanding and mathematical learning. A child with dyscalculia may have difficulty developing number sense, remembering number facts, understanding quantities, using mathematical symbols, or applying procedures even when they are trying hard and have had classroom instruction.

Common signs of dyscalculia

- Difficulty recognising quantities or understanding which number is larger or smaller.
- Ongoing reliance on counting fingers for facts that peers recall automatically.
- Trouble remembering number facts, times tables or calculation steps.
- Confusion with mathematical symbols, place value, money, time, direction or measurement.
- Difficulty estimating, checking whether an answer is reasonable, or seeing number patterns.
- Maths anxiety or avoidance, especially when speed or timed tasks are involved.

Dyscalculia can affect

- Number sense and quantity awareness.
- Counting, sequencing and comparing numbers.
- Place value and regrouping.
- Basic facts and times tables.
- Word problems and choosing the correct operation.
- Time, money, measurement and everyday maths.

Helpful supports

- Use concrete materials, visual models and number lines.
- Teach maths language explicitly and repeat key vocabulary.
- Break procedures into small, clear steps.
- Allow extra time and reduce speed pressure.
- Use structured practice to build fact fluency gradually.
- Encourage explanation, reasoning and checking strategies.

Dyscalculia, dyslexia and dysgraphia: how are they different?

Difficulty	Main area affected	Often noticed as
Dyscalculia	Number sense, maths facts, quantities and mathematical reasoning.	Maths tasks feel confusing, slow or inconsistent.
Dyslexia	Word reading, decoding, spelling and language-based literacy.	Reading and spelling are harder than expected.
Dysgraphia	Written expression, handwriting, transcription and writing organisation.	Getting ideas onto paper is hard or tiring.

Can children have more than one learning difficulty?

- Yes. Dyscalculia can occur on its own or alongside dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADHD or language difficulties.
- A student may understand a maths concept but struggle to read the word problem, remember the facts, organise working out, or write the answer clearly.
- Careful assessment helps identify whether the main barrier is number sense, reading, spelling, written output, attention, language, or a combination.

How O-G Reading Clinic can help

Our clinic focuses on structured literacy, which can support students whose maths learning is affected by reading, spelling, vocabulary, word problems, memory load and written expression. We can help families understand when further maths-specific assessment or school adjustments may also be appropriate.

Clear explanations • Structured support • Parent-friendly guidance