

Children with dyspraxia are falling ‘under the radar’ and missing out on vital support in schools

Monday 9 October, 2017

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Embargoed: 00.01hrs Mon 9th October 2017 / Dyspraxia Awareness Week 8-14th Oct 2017

Children with dyspraxia are falling ‘under the radar’ and missing out on vital support in schools

Charity volunteer joins campaign calling for greater understanding of issues faced by young people with dyspraxia at school

The Dyspraxia Foundation is this week helping to spread the word about a new survey which reveals the lack of awareness of dyspraxia – a form of developmental co-ordination disorder- in schools

The nationwide poll of teachers¹ highlighted that dyspraxia is ‘under the radar’ when it comes to awareness, training and support. **65% said that awareness of dyspraxia in their schools was poor or very poor with 71% saying that lack of awareness and understanding affected children’s opportunities and achievement.**

69% of teachers had not received any specific training to help them identify and support students with dyspraxia meaning that students with the condition are not receiving the recognition, help and understanding they need to achieve their academic and personal potential.

Worryingly, **43% of schools did not have a clear process for identifying students with dyspraxia**, meaning that teachers are unable to identify children who would benefit from further specialist help including that provided by health professionals such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists. A further **31% of respondents said there was no clear pathway for diagnosis** in their area. This is of concern as early diagnosis and intervention is essential to help children reach their potential and develop the skills they need to manage everyday activities. Delays in accessing professional support mean children with dyspraxia are at risk of underachievement, low self-esteem, anxiety and depression.

Sophie Kayani, parent and Chair of the Dyspraxia Foundation comments; *“What this survey has reinforced to us as a charity is that dyspraxia really is the ‘poor relation’ in terms of teacher training and awareness.”*

“Parents who contact our helpline service frequently express frustration at the difficulties they experience getting their child’s needs recognized. In some cases, their children have been dismissed as lazy or naughty, when in fact they have been working very hard to try to keep up with their peers. Often these misunderstandings are the result of ignorance – teachers haven’t received training to help them identify children who may have dyspraxia and to adapt their teaching methods to ensure these children can be successful.”

“Although there are pockets of good practice around the country, health and education services are often not ‘joined up’ so parents are passed from one professional to another in the pursuit of a diagnosis and support. This delays children from receiving the professional help they need and deserve.”

That’s why the Dyspraxia Foundation – the only national charity in the UK dedicated to raising awareness of the condition – will be focusing on raising awareness of dyspraxia in schools for its 2017 Awareness Week during October. During the week the charity will be launching a series of resources and information for teachers and parents.

Sophie adds; *“Whilst this survey has flagged up some very real issues which must be addressed by schools and health services, our charity has a very positive outlook and we support so many wonderful young people who are achieving amazing things – despite their own difficulties. At the Dyspraxia*

Foundation, we truly believe that nothing should hold a young person back from fulfilling their potential."

Dyspraxia, a form of developmental coordination disorder affects gross and fine motor coordination in around 5% of the population (2%, severely). It also affects organisation, planning and time management, and can also affect speech. Males are up to three times more likely to be affected than females. Dyspraxia sometimes runs in families – and there are believed to be one to two children affected in every class of 30 children.

Please contact 01462 455016 or info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk if you would like more information about the Dyspraxia Foundation or to become involved with fundraising or awareness activities during Dyspraxia Awareness Week (8-14th October).

ENDS

For more media / survey information, to set up an interview with a local case study or representative from the Dyspraxia Foundation please call 01462 455016

For more information about the ongoing work of the Dyspraxia Foundation and how to become involved or access help, information and advice, please visit www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk / @DYSPRAXIAFDTN

Note to editors:

¹ The survey ran from 54 days from July 17 – September 9 2017 and was promoted via the Dyspraxia Foundation website and social media channels. There were 183 respondents: 68 were a teaching/learning support assistant; 53 class teachers; 9 year/subject heads; 14 Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher; 21 Special Needs Coordinator; 18 in another role.

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