

1. MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Build a team of health professionals that you trust, who listen to your concerns and are not dismissive of DCC. A good GP and paediatrician will help you navigate the system and should be compassionate and willing to make appropriate referrals when required. Don't be afraid to seek a second opinion.

2. PROGRESS

Try not to compare your child's progress with their peers. Prepare a brief profile page outlining your child's strengths, needs and important details to let others to know about your child. Children with DCC need lots of patience, repetition and encouragement. Give one instruction at a time and don't forget to give them time to process that instruction before asking again or expecting an answer. Use your child's likes, interests and strengths to yours and their advantage. Steady progress is the key. It's not a race.

3. EARLY INTERVENTION

Seek therapies to address any possible or emerging risks of delays or developmental issues. Watch for coordination issues and low muscle tone. Early interventions such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy are mostly play based at this age and are invaluable. A fun, energetic therapist can put together an enjoyable program and make all the difference.

4. AUSDOCC SUPPORTS

Join AusDoCC for support and information from other parents and adults with a DCC. Attend events to meet other families. Watch the videos and buy the "ACC and me" book to help explain DCC to your child and to others, including your child's preschool workers.

5. SOCIAL SKILLS

Notice how your child relates to their peers. Early intervention can help develop good social skills and promote friendships. Seeking connections in the DCC community can help your child to meet others like them and this will help with social skills, confidence and identity. Encourage friendships in your local community.

6. BEHAVIOUR

Some typical DCC behaviours can manifest differently in children with DCC. Inappropriate behaviour may in fact be anxiety or sensory processing issues. Visual schedules and routines can be helpful. Sleep disorders can also be a common concern for children with DCC. Seek help from your paediatrician to avoid bad sleep habits as this can have an impact on the whole family.

7. PRESCHOOL

Prepare your child for preschool by talking about it often and with some positive, fun role playing. Take your child when you are investigating centres. Tell the preschool staff about your child's DCC and give them your child's profile page and the teacher Information from the AusDoCC website. Make staff aware that DCCs are a spectrum and sometimes issues are subtle.

8. SCHOOL

Make a list of questions you may have about how a school will meet your child's needs. Research the schools in your area and any others that may be suitable. Talk to parents of children who attend the schools you like. Consider all options and follow your instincts.

9. NDIS

Advocating for your child's needs is important. Talk to your GP and other health professionals about applying for NDIS supports. Work with clinicians and therapists to develop an NDIS plan for your child. If your child is not receiving the support they need, don't be afraid to seek a second opinion and keep making applications. Talk on social media to see how others are traveling.

10. SELF CARE

Some people express feelings of guilt but you did nothing to 'cause' the DCC so don't beat yourself up. Love your child for the amazing little person that they are. Take care of yourself and reach out to others. Don't be afraid to ask for help and advice from your DCC family. Remember to sing, laugh and dance with your child. It's not always all about therapy.