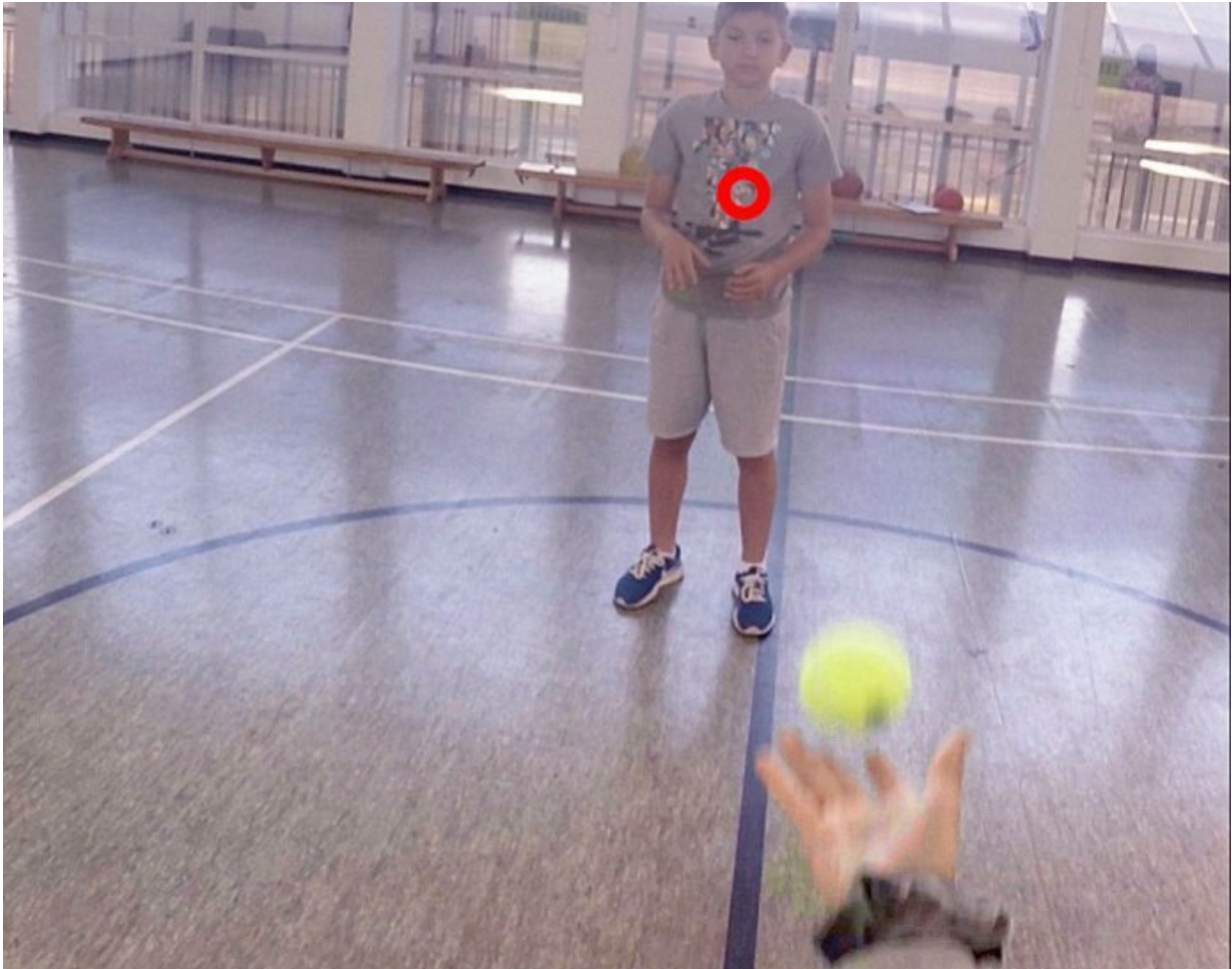


# Eye training to help children with dyspraxia

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Credit: University of Exeter

Children with a coordination disorder can improve skills like throwing and catching with new training videos developed by the University of

Exeter.

Developmental Coordination Disorder (also known as dyspraxia) affects the learning and performance of a range of motor skills.

The new video training programme is designed to help with this, boosting [children](#)'s confidence and skill, and hopefully encouraging them to get involved in sport.

The videos – [available free online](#) – train users to direct their focus to key information that is critical to successful performance, and to avoid distracting thoughts.

The resources, developed with Vbranch House treatment centre in Exeter, and with support from two charities, the Dyspraxia Foundation and the Waterloo Foundation, are based on a five-year programme of study that showed how children with [coordination](#) difficulties can learn to copy techniques used by children who excel at activities like throwing and catching.

"Using eye-tracking technology, we have developed an understanding of how highly skilled children do these things," Professor Mark Wilson, of the University of Exeter.

"After a number of research studies, we have demonstrated that children with (and without) motor coordination difficulties can learn to copy these optimal strategies via video instruction.

"By simplifying the coordination 'problem', children begin to build confidence in their motor and coordination skills, helping them to enjoy the many physical and social benefits of taking part in sport, playground games and physical activity."

The training programme – called See 2 Learn – uses "quiet eye training", an approach pioneered by staff at the University of Exeter.

The videos show a child's eye view of a successful performance of a skill (e.g. throwing and catching a ball), with a red circle on the screen showing where the eye of the thrower or catcher is focussed.

By viewing and repeating these strategies, children with dyspraxia can 'cheat experience' and learn the important rules for success with lower frustration and more confidence.

"We hope that these resources could be useful for parents, teachers, sports coaches and therapists who would like to encourage young people with dyspraxia to get involved in and enjoy sport," said Dr Sam Vine, also of the University of Exeter.

"We want as many people as possible to sign up and give us their feedback so that we can tailor the content for different skills."

Ginny Humphreys, Clinical Consultant at Vbranch House, said: "Many children with motor coordination difficulties find ball skills challenging, and as their peers progress their skills these children are left behind.

"They tend to lose confidence, opt out of playing ball games in the playground and, if not addressed, are more likely to become unfit and obese in the future.

"This great, free resource will help many children improve their basic ball skills through practising one simple technique.

"Success fuels success and once children gain in confidence we hope to see increases in self-esteem, greater enthusiasm for participating in playground games, PE lessons and after-school sports clubs and

ultimately, maybe, a lifelong interest in fitness and sport."

**More information:** For more information, see [www.See2Learn.co.uk](http://www.See2Learn.co.uk)

Provided by University of Exeter

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