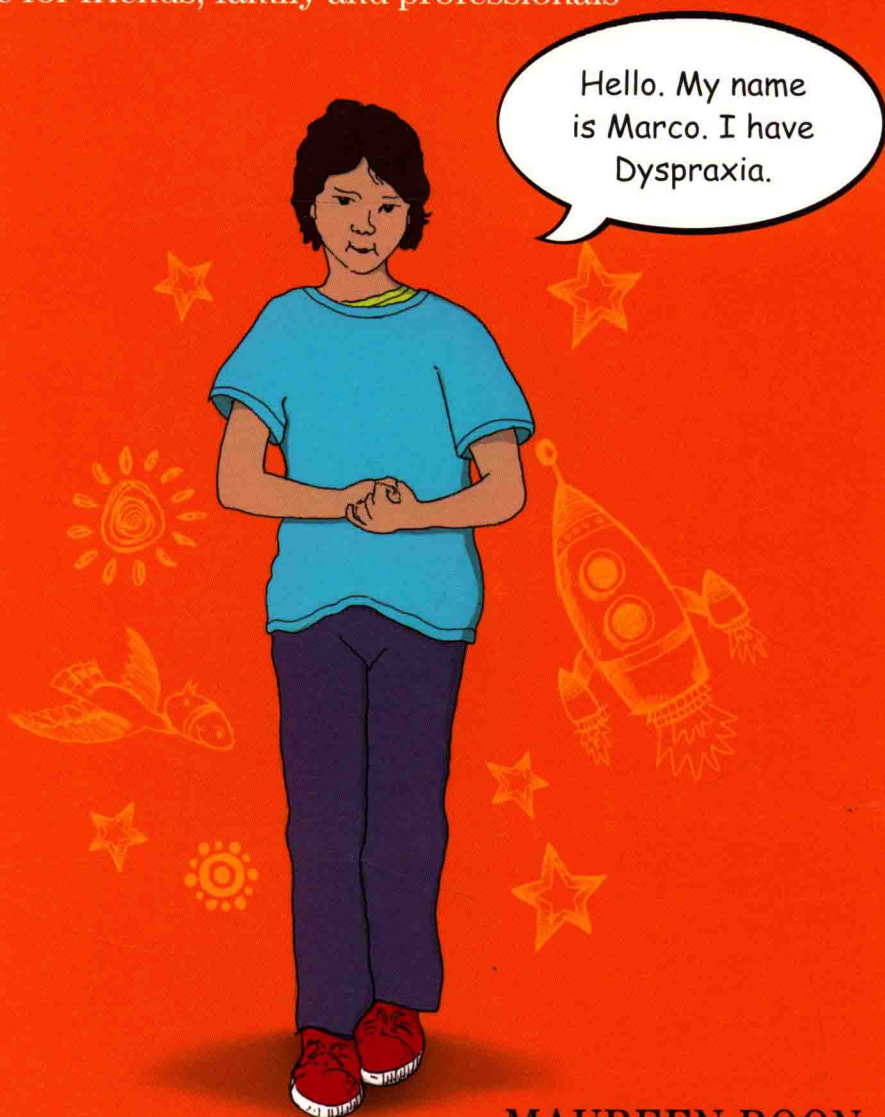


# Can I tell you about Dyspraxia?

A guide for friends, family and professionals



**MAUREEN BOON**

Illustrated by Imogen Hallam

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Jessica Kingsley *Publishers*  
London and Philadelphia

First published in 2014  
by Jessica Kingsley Publishers  
73 Collier Street  
London N1 9BE, UK  
and  
400 Market Street, Suite 400  
Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA

*www.jkp.com*

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**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

Boon, Maureen, 1949- author.

Can I tell you about dyspraxia? : a guide for friends,  
family and professionals / Maureen Boon ;  
illustrated by Imogen Hallam.

pages cm. -- (Can I tell you about--)

Audience: Ages 7+

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-84905-447-8 (alk. paper)

1. Apraxia--Juvenile literature. 2. Psychomotor disorders--  
Juvenile literature. I. Hallam, Imogen,  
illustrator. II. Title. III. Series: Can I tell you about-- ? series.

RJ496.A63B657 2014

618.92'8552--dc23

2013048190

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 84905 447 8  
eISBN 978 0 85700 824 4

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bell and Bain Ltd, Glasgow

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Can I tell you  
about Dyspraxia?

## ***Can I tell you about...?***

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**Tourette Syndrome**

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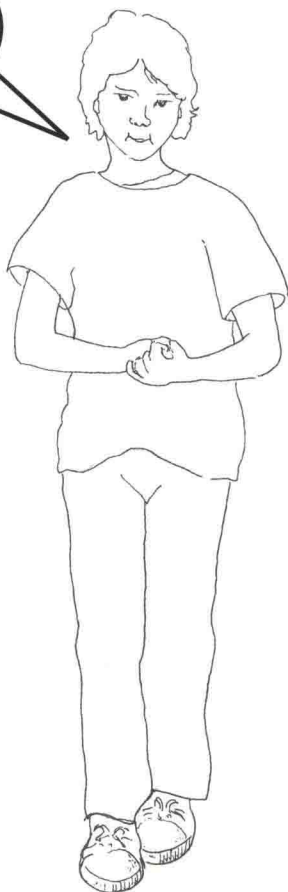
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bell and Bain Ltd, Glasgow



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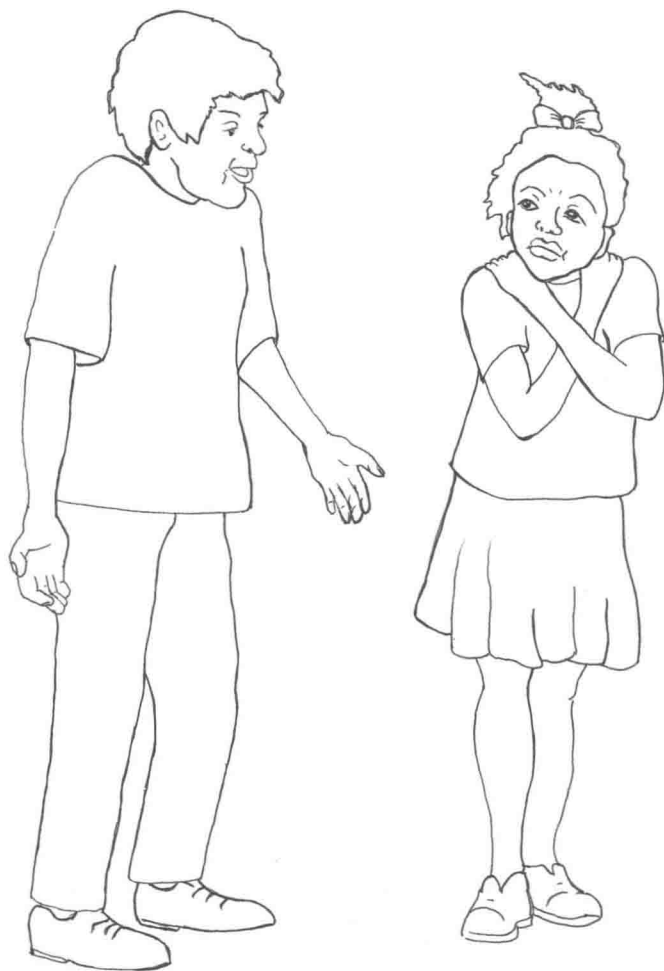
Hello. My name  
is Marco and I  
have dyspraxia.



"I'd like to tell you what it's like to have dyspraxia. Some people call it DCD, which stands for 'Developmental Coordination Disorder', especially my doctor and physiotherapists, but it means the same. People with dyspraxia are usually boys like me but there are some girls too."

“If you saw me you wouldn't know I had dyspraxia until maybe I started doing sport or something that needs good coordination, like making models or tying knots. Then you might notice that I have to work very hard to achieve what other children do without any problems. Other people sometimes think I am being lazy or careless but this isn't true.

Handwriting is also more difficult for me and I have to practise a lot and it takes me longer. Fortunately I'm great on my computer so I prefer to write on that. When teachers look at my handwriting they might at first think, because it's so untidy and difficult to read, that I am not very clever. If they ask me to read it to them they realise that I have some great ideas and usually know the answers. I find it difficult to concentrate for a long time though. When I was in the first class and I was about five years old I had to sit on a carpet with my legs crossed to listen to a story – all of us did – but for me it was a nightmare. I was so uncomfortable and used to wriggle all the time. The other children got annoyed with me bumping into them and the teacher used to tell me off.”



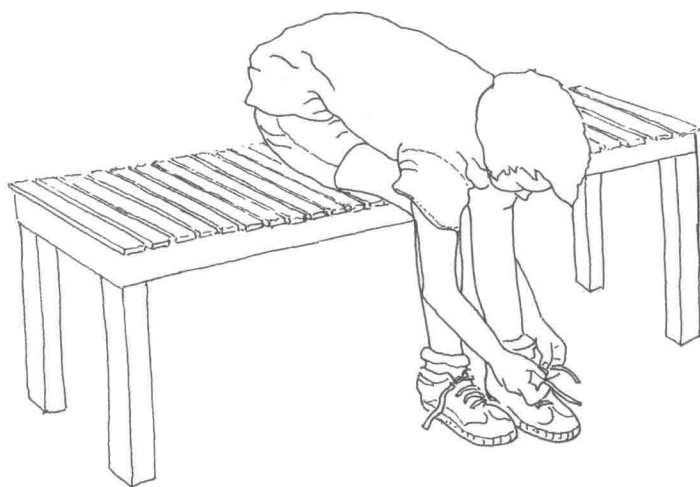
"My friend Clara sometimes can't think of the right word to say and clams up."

“I also tend to forget things I’m meant to take to school, like my sports kit and homework. My mum helps me with this and makes me check my bag, but it’s easy for me to forget and then I get in trouble at school.

People sometimes think I’m scruffy because my clothes don’t seem to look right. By the end of the day my shirt seems to have come out of my trousers, my shoes are undone and my hair is sticking up. I have to try really hard to stay tidy!

One of my friends, Clara, has a different sort of dyspraxia called verbal dyspraxia and she finds it difficult to say some sounds, like for ‘more’, she says ‘ma’. Sometimes she just can’t think of the right word to say and clams up. Clara told me that she can find reading difficult because she mixes up the sounds of the letters and words. Sometimes she doesn’t understand what people say to her as they speak too quickly and she finds it very frustrating. Sometimes the other children don’t understand what she says and give up trying to work it out.”

CAN I TELL YOU ABOUT DYSPRAXIA?



“Tying laces is tricky.”

“As I said before, doing fiddly things with my hands is difficult for me and that includes getting dressed for school in the morning and getting changed for sport.

When I first went to school I found it really hard to work out which shoe went on which foot. My mum colour-coded my shoes for me by putting a red mark inside the left shoe and a green mark inside the right shoe and that helped – once I remembered which foot was which colour. Also it helped me understand left and right a bit more. Laces and buckles are really tricky so Mum always buys me shoes and trainers with Velcro fittings.

At school we all have the same sort of T-shirts and shorts for PE and it's really easy to get mixed up with other people's clothes. Also as I said before, sometimes I forget things, especially as it takes me longer to get changed. When all the other children have gone and I'm running late I just stuff everything in my bag and rush off – and sometimes things fall out or get forgotten. My mum has put labels in all my clothes so I usually find them again at lost property if I'm lucky.”





"Dressing can be very fiddly."

“Even putting on a sweatshirt can go wrong and I end up with it on the wrong way round and the logo at the back. Mum tells me to always look for the label and make sure it goes at the back. Sometimes though I do that and I end up with my sweatshirt the right way round but inside out. People think it’s funny so I pretend I’ve done it on purpose for a joke, and then I get in trouble with the teacher again!

My school shirt has buttons down the front and I just hate doing it up after sport because I never seem to get the buttons and buttonholes in the right places! Sometimes I just pull it over my head to get undressed quickly and end up losing buttons.

I’m really glad that at my school we don’t have to wear ties like my dad does. I’d never manage that. Fortunately we have ones that just stick on with Velcro.

I find I need new shoes more often than most of my friends because rather than undo them when I take them off I just pull them off, and then when I put them on again – I just push my feet in and they get trodden down on the backs. My mum is always telling me off about this.

Mum has to be careful what the clothes she buys me are made of because some clothes like sweaters can be made of wool and it makes me itch.”