[Insert address]

[Insert date]

Dear [Insert MLA’s name – use <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members> to find your MLA]:

My name is [insert your name] and I am writing to you as your constituent and as an occupational therapist who works with children with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD).

DCD is a chronic motor skill disorder seen in children and youth, which significantly affects activities of daily living, school performance, and leisure activities. Children with DCD struggle to learn basic motor tasks, such as doing up zippers and buttons, throwing and catching a ball, printing at school, and learning to swim.

DCD affects ~30,000 children in British Columbia, yet most children do not receive a diagnosis, therapy, or support. This number equates to 1-2 children in every classroom who are affected. If left untreated, children with DCD are likely to experience behaviour problems in school and display low academic performance, poor self-esteem, and mental health problems.

Although DCD is a chronic lifelong condition, the good news is that a little treatment can go a long way. Occupational therapy is effective in helping children with DCD to learn motor skills, to increase their functioning, and to participate and be successful alongside their peers, but intervention for DCD is not yet standard of care. Best practices in DCD treatment lead to measurable improvements in adaptive functioning (e.g., greater independence with self-care activities, improved written output at school, acquisition of motor skills to enable participation in play and leisure activities), which can have a positive effect on the child’s self-esteem and mental health.

I am writing to request your support to ensure funding is available for diagnosis and treatment so that children DCD can experience success and the negative developmental trajectory associated with this disorder can be prevented. I would like to meet with you to discuss solutions to better support children with DCD.

* Improved funding/access to school-based occupational therapists (OTs)
* Funding to enable OTs to provide evidence-based intervention as standard of care (currently only those with access to private funds can afford these treatments)
* Funding for early intervention

I look forward to hearing from you to set up a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[Insert name of occupational therapist and sign above]

**Appendix B – Top Tips for Meeting with Elected Officials**

Meeting with elected officials and those running for office is a great way for occupational therapists to communicate on important issues. Through these interactions, you can provide valuable education about occupational therapy. Here are a few tips to help you and your audience get the most out of your meeting:

**Pre-arranged meeting:**

* Be prepared and on time. If you have arranged a meeting with your MLA or a Minister, you will likely have 20-30 minutes at most. Their schedules are very busy, so be prepared and ready to present your information. Bring printed materials with you, but keep them brief and easy to scan/read;
* Dress professionally;
* State your name, profession, and professional affiliation and be sure to identify yourself as a very engaged constituent;
* Make your presentation brief and clear. Select only 1-2 key messages—ask yourself, if they only take-away one thing from your meeting, what would that be? Organize your presentation around those 1-2 key messages; collect information and statistics ahead of time to support your key messages (e.g., gaps in services, incidences, cost/cost-effectiveness, treatment effectiveness, etc.)
* Send additional information that may have been requested.