



IMMANUEL COLLEGE

PARENT RESOURCES

Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD)

ODD is a behavioural disorder, usually diagnosed in childhood, which is characterised by uncooperative, defiant, irritable and annoying behaviours towards parents, peers, teachers and other authority figures. Many children can be oppositional. However, the oppositional behaviour of ODD persists despite reasonable parenting strategies. The most concerning form is that of early onset, which can occur even in preschool years. It puts very considerable pressure on the families.

HOW COMMON IS ODD

ODD is reported to affect between 2% and 16% of children and adolescents in the general population. It is more common in boys than girls. Studies show that at least 40% of children with ADHD have coexisting oppositional defiant disorder.

HOW WILL MY CHILD MANAGE AT SCHOOL?

Children with ODD often have problems with their behaviour at school, and the condition can negatively affect a child's academic progress.

It is advisable to have a discussion with our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) in order to highlight any concerns you may have. They will be able to assess your child's individual needs and design a bespoke programme of support.

In some circumstances, we may suggest an application should be made for an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in order to provide emotional support for your child.

The school has a toolkit of strategies to help support children with ODD.

WHAT CAUSES ODD?

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is thought to be caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors. ODD tends to occur in families with a history of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), substance use disorders, or mood disorders such as depression or bipolar disorder.



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WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ODD?

Many children, especially when they are tired, upset or hungry, tend to disobey, argue with parents or defy authority. However, in children and adolescents with ODD, these symptoms occur more frequently and interfere with learning and social relationships.

Symptoms may include:

- Frequent temper tantrums
- Excessive arguments with adults
- Refusal to comply with adult requests
- Always questioning rules; refusal to follow rules
- Behaviour intended to annoy or upset others
- Blaming others for his/her behaviours or mistakes
- It is never their fault!
- Easily annoyed by others
- Frequently has an angry attitude
- Speaking harshly or unkindly
- Seeking revenge
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It is often very difficult to work out the extent of ODD symptoms in relation to possible autistic spectrum difficulties; therefore, there needs to be very careful assessment and sometimes conditions may coexist together.

HOW IS ODD DIAGNOSED?

A detailed history, observation, and sometimes psychological testing contribute to the diagnosis. ODD is a clinical diagnosis, and the diagnosis is reached by discussing with parents whether or not the child meets criteria for ODD, how long the symptoms have been present, and whether or not they have failed to respond to reasonable parenting support.

HOW DOES ODD AFFECT LEARNING?

Children with ODD can be so uncooperative and combative that their behaviour affects their ability to learn and get along with classmates and teachers. It can lead to poor school performance, anti-social behaviours, and poor impulse control.



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DOES OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER GET BETTER OR GO AWAY OVER TIME?

For many children, Oppositional Defiant Disorder does improve over time.

Studies have shown that the signs and symptoms of ODD resolve within 3 years in approximately 67% of children diagnosed with the disorder.

DOES ODD GET BETTER WITH AGE?

For many children, Oppositional Defiant Disorder does improve over time. However, research has also shown that approximately 30% of children with ODD eventually develop conduct disorder. The risk is three times greater for children who were initially diagnosed at a very young (e.g., preschool) age.

DO CHILDREN GROW OUT OF ODD?

It's okay to hope that your child will grow out of ODD, but ODD won't go away by itself. Your child needs professional diagnosis and treatment early on.

This will help your child develop the skills they need to make and keep friends, get and keep a job, and build a support network later in life.

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER STRATEGIES

Set up expectations ahead of time and allow your child to earn rewards for following those expectations. This is more effective for encouraging compliance than taking the rewards away.

Let your child have a say in what reward they want to work towards. This gives them some responsibility—they know what is expected and what they have to do to earn the things they enjoy. They also feel a sense of pride when they earn what they worked for.

When your child starts getting off track, remind them of what they are working towards rather than telling them what you will take away if they don't listen.

Use warnings to let your child know what is coming next.

For example:

"In ten minutes it's time to turn off your Xbox and come eat dinner," or

"After this programme it is time for homework."

Continue to give reminders such as, "In two minutes it's time for dinner."

A timer can be useful for children who are not aware of the time.



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OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER STRATEGIES

Use empathetic statements to show your child you understand how they feel.

Think about how you would feel if someone came into your room and said, "Get off the tablet and go to bed."

Although they are expected to follow rules, use a statement such as:

"I know you are really enjoying playing on your device and you don't want to turn it off, but you are tired and need to get up for school in the morning."

This shows you understand how they are feeling.

Phrase your directions in a positive way and remove the word "can."

For example, instead of "Stop jumping on the bed" or "Can you stop jumping on the bed?"

Try something like "Sit down" or "Come down off the sofa" in a calm but confident tone.

Try to redirect them with an alternative activity.

Children respond much better when you tell them what to do rather than what not to do.

Anything you want your child to stop, phrase positively by giving a clear direction of what you want them to do.

Giving an explanation such as "You can fall" or "That can damage the sofa" is often helpful.

Use descriptive praise when your child listens to your directions, such as:

"Well done, you picked up your toys straight away when I asked," or

"You started your homework without being asked."

This reminds your child what behaviours you are looking for and reinforces them.

Pick your battles.

If your child has dropped their toys all over the bedroom floor and you've just cleaned up, leave them.

As long as they are safe, not hurting or disrespecting themselves or anyone else, and not damaging anything, try to give them as much freedom as possible.

Give your child choices whenever possible, such as:

"Do you want to wear your jeans or shorts?"

"Do you want to do your spelling or reading homework first?"



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OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER STRATEGIES

Follow through with directions.

When you tell your child that they need to pick up their toys before they can play outside, make sure you follow through.

Your child will come to learn to trust what you say — if you don't mean what you say, they won't take you seriously.

Use a timetable with your child that includes homework, showering, getting dressed, TV time, and fun activities.

Place fun activities into the timetable so that your child can see both preferred and non-preferred activities.

Let your child help you put together the timetable.

Structuring their time can help avoid impulsive behaviours such as running around the house.

Avoid arguing or lecturing about your child's behaviour.

Stay with your rules and don't argue.

If your child starts to argue after you've told them what you would like them to do, let them know you're not going to discuss it anymore.

Once they've stopped arguing, praise your child for calming down and listen if they want to talk about their feelings.



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PARENTS/CARERS WELL-BEING

Parenting/caring can be rewarding, but at times physically and emotionally draining. To enable you to support your child effectively, you need to ensure you are monitoring your own well-being. Keep a check on your personal physical and mental health and seek your own support when needed.

USEFUL ODD CONTACTS/INFO

www.verywellmind.com/

www.lanc.org.uk/related-conditions/oppositional-defiant-disorder

www.goodschoolguide.co.uk/special-educational-needs/behavioural/oppositional-defiant-disorder

USEFUL PARENT/CARER SUPPORT

www.nhs.uk/reach4wellbeing

www.supportline.org.uk 01708765200

www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/send/send-info

www.earlyhelphub.co.uk 01905822666

RECOMMENDED READING

