

Oppositional Defiant Disorder & Related Behaviors

A Resource for Parents

Introduction

Every child can be difficult and challenging at times. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the difference between an emotional or strong-willed child and one with oppositional defiant disorder. It is common for children to show oppositional defiant behaviors at certain developmental stages. (Mayo Clinic, 2023)

Behavior concerns may look like:

- Defiant behaviors
- Poor listening
- Hyperactivity
- Emotional dysregulation
- Tantrums
- Impulsiveness

When concerns become oppositional defiant disorder:

- A frequent and ongoing pattern of anger, irritability, arguing, and defiance towards parents and other authority figures
- Symptoms are present before teen years and last at least 6 months
- Symptoms must include at least 4 of the symptoms listed to the right →
- Symptoms cause significant problems in relationships, social activities, school, for both the child and the family

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Signs and symptoms of ODD can be grouped into three categories:

Anger and irritability



- Lose their temper easily.
- Frequent outbursts of anger and resentment.
- Touchy and/or easily annoyed by others.
- Frequently angry and/or disrespectful.

Argumentative and defiant behavior



- Excessively argue with adults.
- Actively refuse to comply with requests and rules.
- Blame others for their own mistakes.
- Deliberately try to annoy or upset others.

Vindictiveness



- Spiteful and seeking revenge.
- Saying mean and hateful things when angry or upset.

Cleveland Clinic

(Adapted from Mayo Clinic, 2023 & Cleveland Clinic, 2023)

Parent Strategies for behavior concerns

- **Recognize and praise** your child's positive behaviors, as close to the time you see them as possible and be as specific as possible.
 - e.g. "I really liked the way you helped clean up your toys just now"

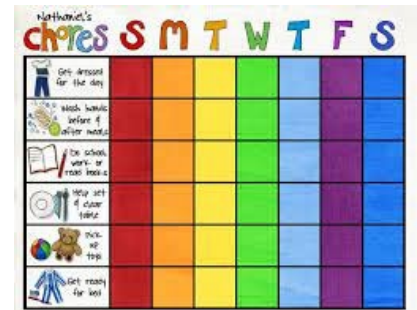
- **Model the behavior** you want your child to have. Watching you manage your emotions in a healthy manner and interact well with others can improve your child's social and emotional skills.
- **Pick your battles** and avoid power struggles. Almost everything can turn into a power struggle if you allow it.
- **Set limits** by giving clear instructions and using reasonable consistent consequences. Discuss these limits and setting rules during times when you're not arguing with each other.
- **Set up a routine** and ask your child to help develop that routine/daily schedule.
 - The daily schedule can include rewards you choose together and down time/free time activities.
- **Assign a household chore** that is needed and won't get done unless your child does it. Start with tasks that are fairly easy to do well (to set them up for success) and gradually blend in more important/challenging jobs.
- **Give good commands** that are consistent, clear, and direct. Tell, don't ask and use a neutral tone. Allow children time to respond to command.
- **Be prepared for challenges early on with changes.** Expect behavior to worsen at first when implementing strategies, it will be important to stay consistent through challenges.

(Adapted from Mayo Clinic, 2023)

Reward Systems

The Credit System:

1. Ways to earn points – coming up with points system for example:
 - Following rules (e.g. no name calling or no arguing)
 - Positive behaviors (e.g. responsible behavior or being polite and respectful)
 - Doing chores (e.g. making the bed or taking the trash out)
2. Ways to spend points – coming up with ways to spend points they earned for example:
 - Trip to store to spend earned money
 - Electronic time
 - Going to the movie theater



Creative Options:

1. Reward Jar- have a jar that can be filled up for good behaviors, decide on the reward for when the jar is filled up.



2. Sticker Chart- decide together what behaviors would allow child to get a sticker, 5 stickers= reward
3. Develop reward chart with child to increase to probability they follow it, you can get creative with it and gear it towards their interests!

Additional Resources (Websites/Workshops/Books/Apps)

Parent Recommendations:

- Phone Parenting Apps:
 - Bright parenting
 - Parenting2go
 - HelloJoey
 - Family5 best of parenting
- Reading
 - “The Defiant Child: A Parent’s Guide to Oppositional Defiant Disorder” By Dr. Douglas A. Riley
 - “The Explosive Child” By Ross W. Greene, PhD
 - “Parenting Children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder” By Erika Bishop
 - “Zero to Five: 70 Essential Parenting Tips Based on Science” By Tracy Cutchlow

Children Recommendations

- “Oppositional Defiant Disorder Activities: 100 Exercises Parents and Kids can do Together to Improve Self-esteem, and foster connection” By Laura McLaughlin