



What is Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)?

Characteristics of ODD

ODD behaviours usually surface when the child is at primary school, but the disorder can be found in children as young as three years of age.

A child with ODD may:

Become easily angered, annoyed or irritated

- Have frequent temper tantrums
- Argue frequently with adults, particularly the most familiar adults in their lives such as parents
- Refuse to obey rules
- Seem to deliberately try to annoy or aggravate others
- Have low self-esteem
- Have a low frustration threshold
- Seek to blame others for any accidents or bad behaviour.

How can I distinguish signs of ODD from the typical “challenging” behaviour all children sometimes display?

Determining whether your child might have ODD can be difficult, since most children will exhibit some of the symptoms every now and then (especially when they're tired, hungry or upset). A child with oppositional defiant disorder, however, will:

- display these symptoms much more often than other children
- consistently demonstrate behavioural issues for a period of at least six months
- often have problems with school and friendships as a direct result of the behaviour
- have their overall functioning appreciably compromised by their challenging behaviours

Source: <http://www.childrenshospital.org/az/Site1385/mainpageS1385P0.html>

Tips for Handling an ODD Child:

If your child suffers from Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD):

- Recognize and praise your child's positive behaviours. Be as specific as possible, such as, "I really liked the way you helped pick up your toys tonight."
- Model the behaviour you want your child to have.
- Pick your battles. Avoid power struggles. Almost everything can turn into a power struggle — if you let it.
- Set limits and enforce consistent reasonable consequences.
- Set up a routine. Develop a consistent daily schedule for your child. Asking your child to help develop that routine may be beneficial.
- Build in time together. Develop a consistent weekly schedule that involves you and your child spending time together.