



Hindlip First School
Tibberton First School



Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

This guidance has been written by our partners at
Perryfields Primary PRU.



Perryfields Primary PRU

What Is Oppositional Defiant Disorder?

ODD is a childhood disorder that is defined by a pattern of hostile, disobedient and defiant behaviour directed at adults or other authoritative figures.

It can be due to learned behaviour, a combination of a child's environment or inherited factors including:

- Ineffective, inconsistent, harsh or lax discipline or a combination of the two.
- Lack of supervision, neglect or abuse – this could include only one parent being emotionally or physically available due to mental health issues, separation or divorce or being away for prolonged periods due to work, the forces or illness.
- Limitations or development delays in a child's ability to process their thoughts and feelings.
- At least one parent modelling their own oppositional behaviour.
- A lack of structure in family life, no boundaries and any discipline being inconsistent.

ODD is primarily found in children and adolescents. It is characterised by negative, disobedient or defiant behaviour that is much more challenging than what is considered "testing behaviour".

Most children will go through periods of being more challenging, particularly during the period between 18 months and 3 years and later during adolescence. These challenging times are part of a child's normal developmental process in order that they can explore their identity and become more independent.



There may be a generic factor involved in ODD as it does seem to run in families. This may however be learned behaviour from previous generations rather than the effects of a gene.

Challenges Facing Children with ODD

As infants and toddlers an ODD child may display irritability, stubbornness, rigidity, aggression, intense reactions and tantrums.

Children with ODD are often very disobedient. They become easily agitated and can seem angry most of the time. Very young children can throw temper tantrums which can last for over 30 minutes, often over matters which seem to be fairly trivial.

These behaviours can be worsened by inconsistent or excessively harsh parenting techniques. There is a danger that parents could have heightened responses when their child exhibits such behaviours which can then quickly escalate when trying to manage their dysregulation. Unfortunately parents can then take an approach which could be too severe for an ODD child which can then have a detrimental effect on them.

Environmental impact plays a huge part in ODD behaviours being exhibited – family stresses can often be a catalyst to this behaviour.

These behavioural symptoms can be so dominant that it can sometimes make it difficult to recognise other underlying problems such as learning difficulties.

Once children start school the ODD behaviours can impact significantly on their teachers, other adults and peers. Their lack of social skill and argumentativeness prevents them from developing and maintaining friendships which can lead to isolation.

Unfortunately children with ODD will often initiate an argument and will not give up until they believe they have won. Even if they know that there will be a



consequence to continuing with the argument they will not be able to stop as their need to win is too great.

They are often unable to accept their own role within a situation so they will frequently blame others. They don't see themselves as being argumentative or difficult. Their failure to accept responsibility will often result in anger and frustration in those around them.

As the child ages, as well as continuing to be defiant they may also steal or lie.

Older children with ODD will try to provoke others by being deliberately annoying or critical. They may make a personal attack on an individual by criticising, for example, the way they speak or dress. They will often direct this oppositional behaviour towards a figure of authority such as a parent or teacher, which can result in the relationship being at times, very negative.

Later in life youths who are diagnosed with ODD can also often become bullies who will deliberately use language which taunts or verbally abuses other children.

Other conditions may be linked to children who have ODD. These include:

- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Depression

Recognising ODD Children

The following behaviours could indicate that a child may have ODD however once these have been identified further medical opinion should be sought

A pattern of negative, hostile and defiant behaviour lasting at least six months during which four or more of the following are present:

- often loses their temper
- frequently argues with adults
- often ignores adults' requests or rules
- deliberately tries to provoke people
- frequently blames others for their mistakes
- is often easily irritated by others
- is often angry and resentful
- is often spiteful

CONSIDER.....



Why am I so confrontational

How can you build a positive non-confrontational relationship with me?

What type of language you use

How you give me instructions

How my social skills can be improved

Supporting Strategies

Communication

- ✓ Do not provide opportunities to argue – ODD children will continue with the argument until they feel they have won – which can often result in an initial conversation quickly escalating out of hand.
- ✓ Don't try and engage with them if they are dysregulating - wait until they are in a calmer place.
- ✓ Avoid raising your voice, be neutral and speak calmly.
- ✓ Don't show negative emotions to the child's behaviour as it just reinforces it. Either ignore their negative comments or calmly hand out a previously agreed consequence for the behaviour.

Supporting Strategies

Classroom

- ✓ Most children respond well when teachers clearly state their behavioural expectations – this is especially important for children with ODD.
- ✓ Start by giving them two or three behavioural goals. These may include expectations of the child to accept the word 'no' or 'to follow your instructions'.
- ✓ Put these expectations on a chart and monitor progress throughout the day. Make sure the child understands the expectations at the start of the day. Remind them of these throughout the day. Reward success but also remain positive if expectations aren't met.

- ✓ **Work in partnership with parents and / or carers – ODD children are very good at assigning blame onto others and will often play adults off against each other.**
- ✓ **Where possible try to have a positive relationship with parents and carers to try and reduce oppositional behaviour from them.**
- ✓ **If this is challenging and you feel their behaviour is impacting negatively on their child consider seeking external support.**
- ✓ **Remember ineffective carers can be a contributing factor to ODD.**
- ✓ **Children with ODD often act as though they don't care about others. However, using praise whenever appropriate can make teaching these pupils much more effective.**
- ✓ **Check that their academic levels are appropriate. If it is too difficult they will refuse and then become confrontational when you try to encourage them to engage. If the work is too easy they will quickly become bored and start distracting others.**
- ✓ **Ensure you allow the child 'take-up time 'when giving instructions.**
- ✓ **Limit downtime and plan transitions carefully as children with ODD are more likely to stay on track if they are busy.**
- ✓ **It's helpful to keep in mind that ODD children are unlikely to respond to the threat of punishment. This is because their interest in winning the battle is stronger than their fear of its consequences. For this reason, keeping an ODD child from a beloved item or activity may have little or no effect. More often, the promise of a reward is more motivating for an ODD child. But in either case, be sure to negotiate your terms when the child is calm.**

- ✓ Try where possible to avoid conflict in the first place. This may mean giving continuous praise, making them feel included, giving them special responsibilities or compromising.
- ✓ Discuss any concerns privately. This will help to prevent the child appearing to be in control of the adult in front of the peer group.
- ✓ Ensure you listen to them – let them talk, don't interrupt and only respond once they have finished. If they feel you are not listening it could cause them to escalate.
- ✓ Remember at times however nothing will prevent an ODD episode from occurring. When confronted with an ODD child who has gone off the 'deep end', there may be no way to ease him or her back into the classroom rhythm. For this reason, it's helpful to have a space in the classroom or just outside the door dedicated for 'cooling off'.
- ✓ Often with ODD children the reasons for the argument or the consequences of it are irrelevant. What they are trying to achieve is to push the buttons of someone in authority. Be mindful of this when they become confrontational. If you are consistently calm during these encounters there will be less chance of them re-occurring.
- ✓ It is vital that you remain calm – try to plan in advance your responses should the child become confrontational. Don't raise your voice or argue when they start to become verbally aggressive silence until they have calmed is a good option.
- ✓ Do not take the defiance personally. If you are supporting them in a calm and collected way remember you are not the cause of their outburst just the outlet.
- ✓ By entering into a debate with you they are obtaining your full attention which is often what they are craving. Try to find more positive ways for them to receive your attention – arrange for them to help you with a job, ask their opinion of something, get them to model a task in class or help them pursue a particular interest maybe.

- ✓ **Pick your battles carefully. Choosing a few of areas to focus on will be more productive than trying to address every behaviour concern. Develop their emotional intelligence so they are more able to understand their behaviour but also recognise the impact it has on others.**
- ✓ **They may not have experienced at home what a positive, non – confrontational relationship can look like. Model positive relationships and highlight the benefit of these. Show them that relationships can be effective when not confrontational.**

Supporting Strategies

Playtime and Lunchtime

- ✓ **Remember playtimes and lunchtime can be particularly challenging for children with ODD due to lack of structure and the opportunities for confrontation.**
- ✓ **Manage carefully interaction with other children on the playground. Try to organise team games where everyone gets an opportunity and manage competitiveness.**
- ✓ **If the playground can't be managed effectively then provide an alternative activity inside with a suitable friend.**
- ✓ **Ensure there are supporting staff in the dining room to deflect any potential problems, as an ODD child will still see a Dinner Supervisor an authority figure, so will look for opportunities to press their buttons.**
- ✓ **Food can be a catalyst in dysregulated behaviour. When children are hungry they become less tolerant. There are also lots of opportunities**

for an ODD child to start an argument – cold food, hot food, their choice is not available, particular smells, vegetables – the list could go on
Be sure that the staff who are dealing with them have an understanding of ODD and are equipped to defuse situations.

- ✓ Consider where they eat their lunch – is a busy, loud dining hall (where often arguments in the line occur as does pushing provide a suitable environment for an ODD child?

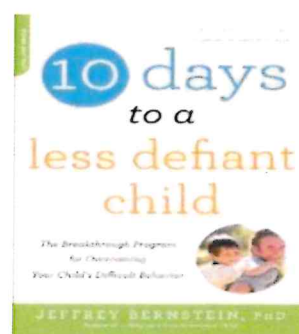
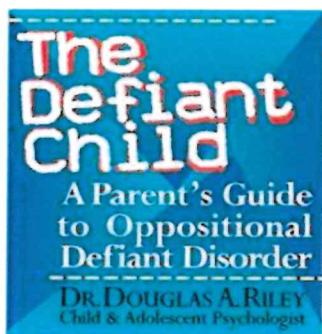
- ✓ If the playground can't be managed effectively then provide an alternative activity inside with a suitable friend. Be mindful however that once playtime is over they will need time to exercise as this has a positive benefit.

Support can be found at -

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

www.dailystrength.org/group/oppositional-defiant-disorder-odd

Suggested reading:



The Defiant Child – Dr Douglas A Riley

10 Days to a Less Defiant Child – Jeffrey Bernstein