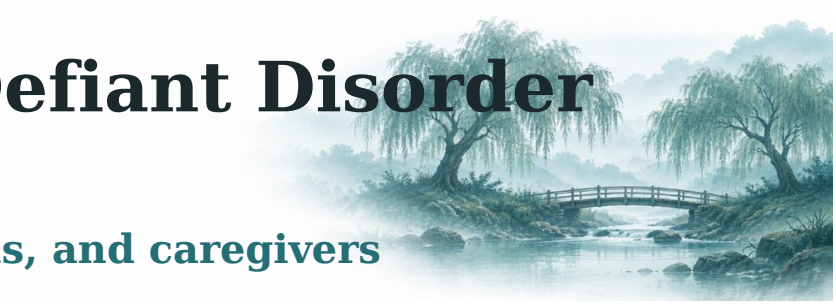
Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)



A guide for children, teens, and caregivers

ODD involves a persistent pattern of irritable mood, arguments, and defiant or spiteful behavior that disrupts daily life and relationships. The pattern exceeds what is typical for the child's age and development. A careful assessment considers learning, health, stress, and family circumstances. Support helps children and caregivers build useful skills.

Common symptoms

- Frequent anger or temper loss
- Often arguing with adults
- Refusing requests or rules
- Easily annoyed or resentful
- Blaming others or acting spitefully

Why does it happen?

ODD has no single known cause. Biology, stress, and life experiences may play a part. Care should consider the child's needs and family circumstances.

Treatment and outlook

Parent training in behavior management is central, especially for younger children. Caregivers practice clear instructions, specific praise, and predictable responses with a therapist. This builds skills and relationships; it does not mean parents caused the problem.

School-age children may practice coping and problem-solving skills. Teens should help choose goals, with family sessions and school support when useful. The clinician also assesses learning, anxiety, ADHD, trauma, and other concerns.

Medicines are not the main treatment for ODD. If one is suggested, ask what specific symptom or co-occurring condition it targets and how benefit and side effects will be checked.

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Living with ODD

Practical steps between appointments



Home and school

Keep expectations clear. Set a few realistic rules and respond consistently. Notice effort and praise cooperation.

Connect when calm. Make time for fun together. During conflict, pause and return to problem-solving once everyone is calmer.

Practice together. Use skills learned in therapy and share them with school. Include your child in planning small changes.

Share a calm response plan with school. Ask what triggers conflict and which supports help participation. Educational evaluation determines whether an IEP or 504 plan is appropriate.

When to seek help

Seek help when conflict disrupts family life, school, or friendships.

Get urgent help for threats or aggression that could cause serious injury.

Get urgent help

For suicidal thoughts or a mental health crisis, call or text **988** in the US. Call **911** for immediate danger or a life-threatening emergency. Children and teens: tell a trusted adult right away.

For your next appointment

Which situations lead to conflict? What has improved with practice? Agree on one or two measurable goals, such as calmer transitions or fewer unsafe arguments.

Learn more
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Sources and References

1. **Mental Health Treatment for Children**

   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention · Updated 2026-05-12

   https://www.cdc.gov/children-mental-health/treatment/index.html

2. **Frequently Asked Questions: Section 504 Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

   U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

   https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/disability-discrimination/frequently-asked-questions-section-504-free-appropriate-public-education-fape