

# A Family For Every Child

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder

### Matching Assistance Program

October 2010

#### Oppositional Defiant Disorder At a Glance:

- It is more common in boys than girls.
- There is not one exact cause, but biology and environmental factors may play a role.
- Brain imaging studies have suggested that children with ODD may have small differences in the parts of the brain that are responsible for reasoning, judgment and impulse control.
- Children with ODD have a hard time reading social cues, and tend to interpret neutral situations as hostile.
- In roughly 67% of children diagnosed with ODD, the symptoms typically are resolved within 3 years of the initial diagnosis.
- If left untreated, children may develop a conduct disorder later in life. About 30% of children diagnosed with ODD develop a conduct disorder, and the risk is three times greater for children diagnosed during the preschool age.
- See the Oppositional Defiant Disorder Resource Center page on the **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's** website for more information, videos, and resources: <http://www.aacap.org/cs/ODD.ResourceCenter>

#### Symptoms

Symptoms include:

- Not following adult's requests.
- Angry and resentful of others.
- Argues with adults
- Blames others for their own mistakes.
- Has few or no friends; has lost friends.
- Are in constant trouble at school.
- Loses temper often.
- Spiteful, or revenge-seeking.
- Easily annoyed or touchy.

To be classified as ODD, the symptoms must persist for six months or longer; their behavior must be very different from other children around the same age; cause significant problems in school or social activities; and must interrupt day to day functioning. It is more common in boys than girls, and it commonly appears around the age of 8. Often the symptoms are similar to those of depression and ADHD, so those should also be considered before diagnosing a child with ODD.

#### *Links:*

**American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:**

<http://www.aacap.org/cs/ODD.ResourceCenter>

#### Causes

The exact cause of Oppositional Defiant Disorder is unknown. A combination of biology, environmental factors, and social factors are thought to contribute to the development of ODD. It tends to occur in families with a history of ADHD, mood disorders and substance abuse disorders. In addition, lack of parental structure and supervision, inconsistent discipline, and exposure to abuse are all thought to be contributing factors as well.

#### Treatment

There are a variety of treatments available for children and families who are affected by ODD. Psychotherapy, individual and family therapy are common. Parents should attend parent management training classes to learn effective strategies for dealing with their child's behavior. If ODD coincides with a mood disorder (such as depression or bipolar), an anxiety disorder, or ADHD, medication may be an effective treatment. Working with the child's teacher is also beneficial.

#### *Contact Us*

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