

**From *“No, I Won’t!”* to *“Yes, I Can!”*  
Supporting Children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder: A Study Guide for Elementary School Teachers**

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# Introduction

This study guide is intended to accompany the PowerPoint presentation “From ‘No, I won’t!’ to ‘Yes, I Can!” Supporting Children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is defined as challenging, resistant, and aggressive behavior in children (Smith and Bondy, 2007). This can include arguing with adults, purposely annoying others, and showing aggression towards peers.

**Guided Notes**

This section provides space to fill out guided notes following the PowerPoint presentation.

**Before we get Started…**

Take time to reflect on your past experiences of students with defiant traits in your classroom. Have you had a student in your classroom with this disorder? How would you describe the experience? Was it positive? Negative? Neutral? Feel free to use the space below as you reflect.

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**Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)**

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Reflect! What is it like for you as a teacher to experience these behaviors in the classroom?

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**Supporting Students with ODD in the Classroom**

**Establishing Clear Rules**

To help support students with ODD in your classroom, one way you can start is by examining how you state and teach classroom rules. It is important to explain classroom rules in a clear manner and to state them positively when possible.

“Be responsible”

“I am responsible when I put the classroom supplies on the shelf.”

**VS.**

Give it try! Try rewriting one of your rules or a school rule in a positive and clear manner.

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**VS.**

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**Providing Praise**

Praise lets students know when they are doing the right thing. It should be specific and enthusiastic! Change the statement below to be more specific.

*Jordan cleans up the classroom library without any prompting from the teacher.*

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“Good Job!”

**Using Effective Requests**

1. Requests that are clear and to the point.

*Ex: “Please turn to page 45.”*

1. Requests that include something about the lesson within it. This helps bring your students attention to the lesson in a positive and interesting manner.

*Ex: “Can anyone guess what our new book is about? Tell me your ideas as you turn to Chapter 1.”*

Practice writing one of these requests with the example below.

*It is time to start a science lesson on the layers of the earth.*

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Effective request:

**Tone of Voice**

Pay close attention to your tone of voice. Your tone of voice should vary based on the type of interaction.

**Token Economy**

Token economies involve providing a student with a token, such as school dollars, stickers, or points, for good behavior that they can later exchange for rewards. Interviewing students about their interests can help in picking desirable items for token economies. Further, rewards don’t always have to be tangible; they can be experiences like picking your seat fora day, a free homework pass, or lunch with a favorite teacher.

Reflect! Do you currently have a token economy in place at your school? If so, how is it working for you? If it doesn’t seem to be working, what would you like to see your school try?

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**Check in/Check Out**

Some students may benefit from a more individual approach to managing behavior, such as a “Check In/Check Out” system. This involves having the student check in with a staff member at the beginning and end of each day. Students carry a behavior report card with them throughout the day and teachers make marks on whether student achieved their targeted behaviors. Points for engaging in positive behavior can then be exchanged for rewards at the end of the day.

Reflect! Using a team approach like the Check in/Check Out strategy often requires the help of colleagues. Who at your school can you turn to for help with managing behavior? If you are unsure, consider asking your colleagues who they have received help from in the past.

**Case Study**

**Part 1**

Ruth is 8 years old and has Oppositional Defiant Disorder. In the classroom, Ruth often refuses requests from her teacher. For example, as the students finish up their table work, Mrs. Jones asks them put their journals away and come to the carpet. Ruth stays seated, playing with her pencil. Mrs. Jones says “Come to the carpet now and stop playing with your pencil!”

Ruth shouts, “No!”

Mrs. Jones, whose voice is escalating, says, “Come to the carpet, NOW! How many times do I have to ask?”

“Ruth, directly looking at Mrs. Jones says, “I don’t want to listen to your stupid story!” She slams down her journal on the table.

**Part 2**

As the students finish up their table work, Mrs. Jones asks everyone to put their journals away and to come to the carpet. Ruth stays seated, playing with her pencil. Mrs. Jones says, “Who has a guess on why the character is sopping wet on the cover of this book? Tell me your ideas as you find a spot on the carpet.”

Ruth makes her way over to the carpet and quickly raises her hand and says, “She’s at the water park!”

Mrs. Jones responds, “Ruth, you showed me that you were ready by coming to the carpet and raising your hand. You are ready to learn! Does the class have any other ideas?”

**Discussion**

Pay close attention to the way the teacher responded when Ruth did not immediately follow her request.

“Come to the carpet, NOW! How many times do I have to ask?”

Notice the emotion in this statement? This only increased the power struggle between Ruth and her teacher.

Notice how Mrs. Jones changed her request to one that included something about the lesson within it. She kept her voice calm and praised Imani when she completed the request.

“Who has a guess on why the character is sopping wet on the cover of this book? Tell me your ideas as you find a spot on the carpet.”

**Glossary**.

**Alpha Request:** A request that is clear and to the point.

**Beta Request:** Emphasizes the sender’s feelings about the students’ behavior.

**Content Imbedded Request:** Includes something about what you are asking within the request.

**Defiant:** Challenging and noncompliant behavior that often includes refusing to follow requests or rules.

**Good Behavior Game:** An intervention that involves splitting students into groups and having them compete to receive a reward for engaging in desired, on-task behavior. When a student engages in disruptive or off task behavior, a mark is made on the board for that student’s group. If a group has more than the specified number of marks after a certain amount of time, they do not get to participate in the reward. All groups who have less than the specified number of marks receive an experience reward, such as pencil drum rolls, tip-toe tag, etc.

**Managerial Request:** A request given in the form of a command.

**Reinforcer:** A person, place, or thing that encourages a behavior to continue.

**Resentful:** The feeling of being treated unfairly.

**Vindictiveness:** A strong desire for revenge.

**FAQ**

***What should I do if I think one of my students has ODD?***

If you think a student has ODD, contact your school counselor or psychologist. These colleagues are a great resource and are generally familiar with the evaluation process.

***Why should I praise children for doing what is expected of them?***

Although it would be ideal if all children could follow even the simplest of expectations, this is often a difficult struggle for children with ODD. Providing praise lets students know when they are doing the right thing and encourages that behavior to continue. The more often students are praised for appropriate or on-task behavior, they less they will engage in the opposite of those behaviors.

***How long does it take for an intervention to start working?***

Behavior change takes time; you might not see a change in behavior the very first time you use a new strategy. It helps to meet the child where they are and include goals you know the child can be successful in reaching. With time, consistency, and small increases in the behavioral expectations for your student, you will start to see change. If you give up, however, you will have to start all over again.

**Annotated Bibliography**

**Jones, S. H. (2018). Oppositional defiant disorder: An overview and strategies for educators. *General Music Today, 31*(2), 12-16. 10.1177/1048371317708326**

In this article, the researchers describe Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) as challenging, resistant, and aggressive behavior in children. To help children with ODD be successful in the classroom, the researcher first recommends providing a clear idea of what appropriate behavior looks like. Carefully explaining the rules helps students to learn what each rule is and what it looks like to follow that rule. Next, it is important to determine what will happen when a child does not follow a rule. When is a warning given? Is something taken away? Is a call made? It is important to decide this before a behavior occurs so that you know how to respond when it happens.

It is also important to decide what will happen when a child does follow a rule. Providing praise lets students know when they have done the right thing and encourages them to continue that behavior. Teachers might consider using rewards or charts to help children monitor their behavior throughout the day. During these interactions, it is important to pay careful attention to the tone of voice used. Jones (2018) suggests teachers use a different tone of voice when providing praise, instruction, and recognizing problem behavior. This helps children understand both the nature and the seriousness of a request.

**Leflot, G., van Lier, P. A. C., Onghena, P., & Colpin, H. (2010). The role of teacher behavior management in the development of disruptive behaviors: An intervention study with the good behavior game.*Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 38*(6), 869-882. 10.1007/s10802-010-9411-4**

In this article, the authors discuss ways in which teachers can use The Good Behavior Game to encourage positive, on-task behavior in students with ODD. The Good Behavior Game is a peer-based approach that encourages team work. In the game, children are split into groups, working together to receive a reward. During the game, teachers praise children and their groups for appropriate, on-task behavior. However, when a student is off-task, the teacher then makes a mark on the board for that student’s group. Only groups who have less than a certain amount of marks get to participate in the reward at the end. The Good Behavior Game has been found to decrease defiant behavior and hyperactivity as well as increase on-task behavior.

**Smith, A., & Bondy, E. (2007). No! I won’t!: Understanding and responding to student defiance.*Childhood Education, 83*(3), 151-157. 10.1080/00094056.2007.10522900**

When working with challenging behavior from students, it is important to first figure out why the behavior is occurring. Behavior typically occurs for one of two reasons: to either get something or to avoid something. If you can figure out which of these is happening, you will have better luck finding a strategy that fits the student’s needs. To help prevent defiant behavior, these researchers recommend starting with the basics. This includes explaining rules in a clear, specific manner as well as giving directions with 10 words or less. It is also helpful to maintain a predictable schedule to inform students when changes will occur.

When responding to challenging behavior, pay close attention to your own feelings about the situation. Avoid pleading or using an angry tone when students are not complying. Be sure to keep your facial expression and body language neutral while still being stern with your request. Using “when… then…” statements can also be helpful, as they bring attention to a fun activity that will occur after the student completes the request. Lastly, the researchers highlight how important it is to start with small steps and celebrate progress along the way. For example, you may like for your student to comply with your first prompt or request; however, for a student with ODD, this won’t be easy. For that student who takes 8-9 requests to be compliant, celebrate the times when it takes just 6 requests or just 4 requests. Every small change in behavior is an exiting accomplishment for these children.

**Webster-Stratton, C., & Reid, M. J. (2003). Treating conduct problems and strengthening social and emotional competence in young children: The Dina dinosaur treatment program. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 11*(3), 130-143. 10.1177/1063426603011003010**

There are many resources and programs for parents of children with ODD that can also be applied to teaching. In this article, the researchers explain how the Dina the Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem Solving Training Program can help children succeed in early elementary school. In this program, children ages 4-8 are taught problem solving skills, anger management strategies, friendly behaviors, understanding feelings, and rule following. Each skill is taught through role-play, giving students an opportunity to practice these behaviors with other children. Practicing these skills have been shown to help children with ODD establish more positive relationships with their peers at school.

**Additional Websites:**

[**https://childmind.org/guide/oppositional-defiant-disorder/**](https://childmind.org/guide/oppositional-defiant-disorder/)

Check out this website to learn more about ODD, what it looks like, treatment options, and other disorders that often co-occur with ODD.

[**https://goodbehaviorgame.org**](https://goodbehaviorgame.org/)

Visit this website to learn more about the Good Behavior Game and how it can be implemented in your own classroom.

[**http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/**](http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/)

Explore the University of Pittsburgh’s School Based Behavioral Health website to access additional resources concerning both ODD and other disorders.