

Child Behavior Problems

Dealing with a child's behavior problems can be grueling and frustrating. Many parents finally reach that point of wanting to give up. Overwhelmed parents often resort to yelling, threatening, and bargaining with their unruly children (techniques that simply don't work!). Children with serious behavior problems might even have a therapist, school counselor, or other mental health professional involved. Some children even push the envelope to the point of needing residential treatment or hospitalization.

Obviously, the sooner you address your child's behavior problems, the better. Early intervention is the best way to prevent future problems. Parents need to establish a sense of authority when their children are barely toddlers. Allowing a child to get his or her way as a two-year old sets the standard for the rest of their childhood. Parents that give in to their children's tantrums quickly establish who the boss is...and it isn't the parent.

Early assessment is essential for children with serious behavior problems. If your child acts out in ways that are typical for a child of his or her age then there is certainly no need to worry. Behavior problems become serious when a child becomes a danger to himself or others. Tattling, whining, and interrupting are one thing...throwing rocks at cars and hitting teachers is a whole different story.

Many behavior problems are the result of emotional issues, which may or may not be diagnosed. Anxiety and depression are excellent examples...though these are both considered "emotional" issues, they can (and usually do) have a "behavioral" aspect to them. Depressed children, for example, may lash out at others or engage in dangerous or self-harming behaviors...while children with anxiety might present physical symptoms (stomach problems, fatigue, or nausea) as well as behavioral symptoms (obsessive-compulsivity, avoidance behaviors, or irritability).

Other behavior problems, however, are more serious and require professional help. Here are two such disorders:

Conduct Disorder:

According to Wikipedia, the symptoms of conduct disorder are: "verbal and physical aggression, cruel behavior toward people and pets, destructive behavior, lying, truancy, vandalism, and stealing."

Oppositional-Defiant Disorder:

Wikipedia described the symptoms of oppositional-defiant disorder as: "excessive, often persistent anger, frequent temper tantrums or angry outbursts, and disregard for authority. Children and adolescents with this disorder often annoy others on purpose, blame others for their mistakes, and are easily annoyed. In addition, these young people may appear resentful of others and when someone does something they don't like they often take revenge on them."

There are, of course, many other diagnosable behavior problems that are common with children...ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, Reactive-Attachment Disorder, Autism, PTSD, and a variety of different impulse control disorders are just a small handful of them.

Keep in mind that there are many other childhood disorders that can lead to behavior problems. Learning disorders, developmental disorders, and mood disorders can all wreck havoc on a child's behavior.

Chris Theisen is the creator of [The Parent Coach Plan](#), a simple and easy-to-use *in-home discipline program* that provides parents with the information and tools that are needed to establish effective discipline.