

## Behavior Disorders

As teachers in the early childhood setting, we have seen behaviors from children ranging from natural childishness to concerning. How do we know when those behaviors are more than just a kid being a kid?

According to the National Institute of Health, a young person is said to have a behavior disorder when he or she demonstrates a behavior that is noticeably different from that expected in the school or community and if it causes significant impairment in social or academic functioning. The behaviors are generally done in a variety of settings and the child does not often show any sort of remorse.

Some of these behaviors include:

- Breaking rules without a clear reason
- Cruel behavior toward others (bullying)
- Aggressive and cruel behavior to animals
- Running away from class or home
- Vandalizing or destroying property
- Stealing



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Red Flags in Preschool:

- Interrupts often during circle time
- Touches others in line or on the carpet
- Hits when he/she loses temper
- Has a difficult time sharing or taking turns
- Uses unkind words
- Doesn't follow adult requests
- Has a difficult time making friends

Red Flags in Elementary (Criteria for Oppositional Defiant Disorder):

- Often loses temper
- Argues with adults
- Defiant
- Deliberately annoys people
- Blames others for misbehavior
- Easily annoyed
- Angry or resentful
- Vindictive

There are different types of behavior disorders including Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder and Anti-social Personality Disorder. "... Research has demonstrated continuity in the disorders such that conduct disorder is often diagnosed in children who have been previously diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder, and most adults with antisocial personality disorder were previously diagnosed with conduct disorder. For example, some research has shown that 90% of children diagnosed with conduct disorder had a previous diagnosis of oppositional defiant disorder.

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Behavior disorders occur due to a variety of reasons, some of which are genetic. It's important to try and understand what is happening in a child's environment to determine what outside factors could be causing the behaviors. A conduct disorder can be, but is not necessarily linked to child abuse, drug or alcohol abuse by a family member, family conflicts, low IQ or poverty. Conduct disorders can also be associated with ADHD or depression. Students with conduct disorder generally have poor executive functioning skills.

Prevalence of behavior disorders is difficult to measure. It is estimated at 1-10% of the population, occurring more frequently in boys than girls.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conduct\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conduct_disorder)

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000919.htm>