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Child Behavior Disorders

Also called: Conduct disorders

All kids misbehave some times. And some may have temporary behavior problems due to stress. For example, the birth of a sibling, a divorce, or a death in the family may cause a child to act out. Behavior disorders are more serious. They involve a pattern of hostile, aggressive, or disruptive behaviors for more than 6 months. The behavior is also not appropriate for the child's age.

Warning signs can include:

- Harming or threatening themselves, other people or pets
- Damaging or destroying property
- Lying or stealing
- Not doing well in school, skipping school
- Early smoking, drinking or drug use
- Early sexual activity
- Frequent tantrums and arguments
- Consistent hostility toward authority figures

If you see signs of a problem, ask for help. Poor choices can become habits. Kids who have behavior problems are at higher risk for school failure, mental health problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/childmentalhealth.html>], and even suicide [<https://medlineplus.gov/suicide.html>]. Classes or family therapy may help parents learn to set and enforce limits. Talk therapy and behavior therapy for your child can also help.

Start Here

- Normal Child Behavior [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/pages/Normal-Child-Behavior.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/paginas/normal-child-behavior.aspx>]
- What You Can Do to Change Your Child's Behavior [<https://familydoctor.org/what-you-can-do-to-change-your-childs-behavior/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/lo-que-puede-hacer-para-cambiar-la-conducta-de-su-hijo/?adfree=true>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Children's Threats: When Are They Serious? [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Childrens-Threats-When-Are-They-Serious-065.aspx] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
Also in Spanish [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Spanish/Las-Amenazas-de-los-Ni%C3%B1os-Cuando-Hay-Que-Tomarlas-en-Serio-065.aspx]
- Comprehensive Psychiatric Evaluation [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Comprehensive-Psychiatric-Evaluation-052.aspx] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
Also in Spanish [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Spanish/Evaluacion-Siquiatrica-Comprensiva-052.aspx]

- When to Seek Help for Your Child [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/When-To-Seek-Help-For-Your-Child-024.aspx] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
Also in Spanish [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Spanish/Sepa-Cuando-Buscar-Ayuda-para-su-Hijo-Hija-024.aspx]

Treatments and Therapies

- Children and Mental Health: Is This Just a Stage? [<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/children-and-mental-health>]  (National Institute of Mental Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/espanol/los-ninos-y-la-salud-mental>]
- Going to a Therapist [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/going-to-therapist.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/going-to-therapist.html>]
- Mental Health Care Providers for Kids: Who's Who [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/Mental-Health-Care-Whos-Who.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
- Psychotherapies for Children and Adolescents
[https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Psychotherapies-For-Children-And-Adolescents-086.aspx] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
Also in Spanish [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Spanish/Que-es-la-Psicoterapia-de-Ni%C3%B1os-y-Adolescentes-053.aspx]
- Taking Your Child to a Therapist [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/finding-therapist.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/finding-therapist.html>]
- What Is a Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician? [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/pediatric-specialists/pages/What-is-a-Developmental-Behavioral-Pediatrician.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/family-life/health-management/pediatric-specialists/paginas/what-is-a-development-behavioral-pediatrician.aspx>]

Related Issues

- Teaching Your Child Self-Control [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/self-control.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
- Understanding Your Child's Temperament: Why It's Important [<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/How-to-Understand-Your-Childs-Temperament.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/ages-stages/gradeschool/paginas/how-to-understand-your-childs-temperament.aspx>]

Specifics

- 10 Tips to Prevent Aggressive Behavior in Young Children [<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/toddler/pages/Aggressive-Behavior.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/ages-stages/toddler/paginas/aggressive-behavior.aspx>]
- Conduct Disorder [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Conduct-Disorder-033.aspx] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
Also in Spanish [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Spanish/Desordenes-de-la-Conducta-033.aspx]
- Disobedient Child [<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/The-Disobedient-Child.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/ages-stages/gradeschool/paginas/the-disobedient-child.aspx>]
- Disruptive Behavior Disorders [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Disruptive-Behavior-Disorders.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/paginas/disruptive-behavior-disorders.aspx>]
- Fighting and Biting [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Fighting-And-Biting-081.aspx] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
Also in Spanish [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Spanish/Cuando-un-Nino-Pelea-o-Muerde-081.aspx]

- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/oppositional-defiant-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20375831?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- School Refusal [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/School-Refusal-007.aspx] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
- Shyness in Children [<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Shyness-in-Children.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
 - Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/ages-stages/gradeschool/paginas/shyness-in-children.aspx>]
- Swearing [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/pages/Swearing.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
 - Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/paginas/swearing.aspx>]
- Temper Tantrums [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/tantrums.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)
 - Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/tantrums.html>]
- Violent Behavior in Children and Adolescents [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Understanding-Violent-Behavior-In-Children-and-Adolescents-055.aspx]
 - (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
 - Also in Spanish [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Spanish/Comprendiendo-el-Comportamiento-Violento-de-Ninos-y-Adolescentes-055.aspx]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Child Behavior Disorders [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22behavior+disorders%22&aggFilters=ages:child,status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Conduct Disorder [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Conduct+Disorder%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Gender differences in the relationship between bullying victimization and mobile phone... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40731036>]
- Article: Psychopathology and Gaming Disorder in Adolescents. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40728787>]
- Article: What are the factors associated with alcohol, cigarette and marijuana use... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40721255>]
- Child Behavior Disorders -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Child+Behavior+Disorders%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+child+%5Bmh%5D+OR+%22Adolescent+Behav or%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+child+%5Bmh%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%2 2last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR +comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>

Find an Expert

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [<https://www.aacap.org/>]
- Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Finder [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_Youth/CAP_Finder/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resources/CAP_Finder.aspx]
 - (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
- National Institute of Mental Health [<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>] 
 - Also in Spanish [<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/espanol>]
- Psychologist Locator [<https://locator.apa.org/?partner=nlm>] (American Psychological Association)

Patient Handouts

- Conduct disorder [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000919.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
 - Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000919.htm>]

- Discipline in children [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002211.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002211.htm>]
- Oppositional defiant disorder [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001537.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001537.htm>]
- Temper tantrums [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001922.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001922.htm>]
- Trichotillomania [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001517.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001517.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

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- Trichotillomania [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001517.htm>]

Related Health Topics

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [<https://medlineplus.gov/attentiondeficithyperactivitydisorder.html>]
- Child Development [<https://medlineplus.gov/childdevelopment.html>]
- Child Mental Health [<https://medlineplus.gov/childmentalhealth.html>]
- Self-Harm [<https://medlineplus.gov/selfharm.html>]
- Teen Development [<https://medlineplus.gov/teendevelopment.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Child Behavior Disorders* is the National Institute of Mental Health [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>]

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National Library of Medicine 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health

Last updated July 30, 2024