

10 STRATEGIES FOR COMBINED ADHD AND ODD

1 CATCH THEM BEING GOOD.

These kids are used to being yelled at, scolded, and getting in trouble. So acknowledge when they make even small, positive choices.

2 GIVE YOUR CHILD CONSISTENT LOVE AND ATTENTION

Children with these combined behaviors can take a lot of mental energy. As your child's frontal lobe is developing and as they learn to self-regulate, you have to do it for them. So, naturally, you are likely feeling drained. When they are finally behaving well, you might feel the need to take a long needed and highly anticipated break. However, ignoring your child when they are making good choices further reinforces the idea, "Oh. When I'm bad, I get a lot of attention. But, when I'm good, I get ignored." Then, the natural response is to act up again because they receive the attention they wanted in the first place.

3 STAY CALM

Children with combined ADHD and ODD seem to not care and often escalate when confronted, so it is important to remain calm and firm in your commands. Remain calm even when frustrated. If you lose it, own it and acknowledge your mistake, ask for forgiveness if appropriate, and ask for permission to start over.

4 BE CLEAR IN INSTRUCTIONS

Provide one- or two-step instructions and have them repeat it back to you. These children process information differently due to their slower processing speed, so give them time to hear, interpret, analyze, and act on your instructions and commands.

5 ELIMINATE INEFFECTIVE PARENT BEHAVIORS

Behavioral responses such as spanking, swearing, confrontation, and yelling only further escalate a child with ADHD and ODD. Many of these behaviors are developmentally inappropriate and, although they can be effective in the short term, they are almost never effective in the long run.

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GIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE

6

Use words such as “choose,” “decide,” or “pick” to develop a sense of personal responsibility and independence. For example, “I see you have chosen to hit your brother, so you have chosen time out” or “Because you decided to have a bad attitude, you have chosen to stay in your room until you calm down” or “You chose to not study for your test, so you decided to earn a bad grade.” The sense of blame and/or responsibility is taken off the brother, the world, the teacher, and you. Instead, they begin to learn it is a choice and a personal and conscious decision.

PROVIDE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES:

7

It is important to provide positive rewards for good choices even for “things they should be doing anyway.” The reason is because you likely notice when they make poor choices and you also probably make sure they know this. So, why not acknowledge and praise the good they do, too. Everything a child does includes what they “should” be doing, so verbally praise them for the good choices and mix in some tangible rewards every so often.

MONITOR PLAYMATES AND FRIENDS

8

Children with ADHD and ODD tend to be drawn to other children who make the same choices; united, they can cause a great deal of trouble. Know the children in your child’s life.

CREATE A STRUCTURED ENVIRONMENT

9

Children do so much better with structure. This can be achieved through a visual schedule (for younger children), written schedule (for older children), chore chart, and house rules and consequences.

BEHAVIOR REPORT CARD

10

Your child’s teacher will be very grateful if you take the initiative to implement this strategy. Many teachers have not been trained, nor are their classrooms equipped, to handle children with ADHD and ODD. So, if you can create a monitoring and feedback system for both you and the teacher to communicate about your child’s wins and losses (areas needing improvement) both at school and home, your child will greatly benefit. Many children feel they receive an unspoken label at school and then they can’t get past it. Help your child develop a new reputation and hope into choosing better behaviors and a second chance.