Dealing with Opposition

No!

No!

No!

No!
The workshop suggestions are based on the following programs:


- We are teachers [https://www.weareteachers.com/students-with-odd/](https://www.weareteachers.com/students-with-odd/)

What do you do if your child refuses to do homework?

Or just does everything opposite from what you want him or her to do?
Oppositional kids may..........

- lose their temper
- argue with parents
- actively defy requests
- refuse to follow rules
- deliberately annoy others
- blame others for their mistakes and misbehavior
- easily become annoyed and angered
- become resentful, spiteful, or vindictive
- speak harshly or unkind about others
- seek revenge
- have frequent temper tantrums
- demand their way
Oppositional kids may also..........

- Possess a strong need for control, and will do just about anything to gain power.
- Typically deny responsibility for their misbehavior and have little insight into how they impact others.
- Be socially exploitive and very quick to notice how others respond. He then uses these responses to his advantage in family or social environments, or both.
- Tolerate a great deal of negativity – in fact they seem to thrive on large amounts of conflict, anger and negativity from others, and are frequently the winners in escalating battles of negativity.
- Have academic problems
- Be impulsive
- Have trouble sitting still
Steps in Dealing with Opposition

1) Find out why – they may have a reason other than they just don’t want to do it

2) Stay calm - Don’t let them push your buttons

3) If they are truly oppositional, take control of the opposition with boundaries, consequences, structure, expectation, and diligence.
1) Find out why they don’t want to do their homework or complete a task

- They can’t sit anymore after sitting all day at school
- Homework or chores bore them
- Don’t understand the homework or task
- Is just oppositional to everything we want them to do
- Is anxious about getting it wrong and so procrastinates rather than get it started
- Want to do something else fun like TV or videogames
- Is something bothering them at home or school?
If your child answered any of these:
• They can’t sit anymore after sitting all day at school
• Homework or chores bore them
• Don’t understand the homework or task
• Anxious about getting it wrong and so procrastinates rather than get it started
• Something bothering them at school or home (bully, divorce)
• Want to do something else fun like TV or videogames

....then see Homework without the Headache workshop at bcslibrary.org/elementary

If your child fits the description below, then this workshop may help

Is just oppositional to everything we want them to do
2) Don’t let them push your buttons

- What happens if you don’t get your soda?
- You kick and hit the machine. Get angry. Shake it.
- But then you give up.

If your child can get you angry by being oppositional, they will keep doing it. They will keep pushing your button and you will keep giving them what they want. What they want might be avoiding homework or getting their way.
Getting a reaction out of you may be their chief hobby

**They like to see you mad**

- They try to provoke reactions in people and are often successful in creating power struggles.
- Therefore it is important to have a plan and try not to show any emotion when reacting to them.
- If you react too emotionally, you may make big mistakes in dealing with your child.
- Plan in advance what to do when your child engages in certain behaviors and be prepared to follow through calmly.

**Choose your battles**

- Decide which behaviors you are going to ignore and which ones you can’t stand or are dangerous.
- Most oppositional children are doing too many things you dislike to include all of them in a behavior management plan.
- Thus, target only a few important behaviors, rather than trying to fix everything.
If you become angry or frustrated:

• You give them power to rule over your emotions
• You may get so frustrated that you do the homework for them or just give up on them following the rule
• They associate homework or rules with negative images of you yelling
• Remember that you are their role model and if you are angry and frustrated, they will imitate you
If you want your child to be calm, then you may need to calm yourself first.

If you feel yourself getting angry, leave the situation for about 60 seconds.

During that time, distract yourself with something else (do not think about what your child did to make you angry).

Remind yourself that you do not have to be angry to handle the problem. Your anger will actually make the situation harder to handle.

Breathe in slowly through your nose and out of your mouth a few times.
Stay calm, brief, and businesslike

Lengthy lectures can trigger defiance.

Brief responses do not give them the reward of your prolonged attention.

They tune you out after some point of yelling and then they feel victimized and justified to be defiant.
Don’t get entangled in arguments

If you find yourself arguing with your child........

- Take a time out to cool down
- Or repeat your original request in a calm tone with no emotion
- Or impose the consequence that you told them they would get

Parent time-out
Reframe your struggle

• Parents of oppositional kids may feel victimized by their child’s temper tantrums and strong will
• Rather than see yourself as the result of your child’s will, see yourself as the builder of your child’s future.

• You are not a victim
• You are your child’s teacher
• You are in control
• Many children has been assigned identities by the important adults in their lives. They have been called "bad", "not very bright", "rude", “smart,” etc.

• If you say that they are something, then they accept that you are right. They adopt that identity. What do bad people do?...bad things.

• Don’t say that a child IS a particular type of person. Not even a positive name like “bright” or kind.” You can say that the behavior or action was rude or kind when talking to them, but when you tell them they “are” that, they feel powerless in changing their behavior.
3) Take control of the opposition with boundaries, consequences, structure, expectation, and diligence.

If you decide that they “just don’t want to do the work,” don’t allow them to distract, whine, argue, or complain to get out of homework or chores.

It also takes boundary setting, structure, and a will to give consequences every time your child is oppositional
Set boundaries
The oppositional child needs boundaries and rules with limited choices – this helps them believe they are safe, yet have some power

- Deliver a command in a calm firm tone of voice
- Give them small choices within your boundaries
- Explain the consequences if they do not do the task and give them rewards when they accomplish it

- “Please start your homework.”
- “You can choose either 15 minutes of TV or 15 minutes of videogame playing when you are done.”
- “Your homework needs to be completed in order for you to watch TV or play videogames.”
Create boundaries

- Life can be scary if no boundaries are in place for a child
- Set clear expectations around homework and responsibilities
- Take into consideration their attention span, their strengths and weaknesses in school subjects, and their ability to work independently without your guidance.

What Is a Boundary?

- **A BOUNDARY** is a definite place where your responsibility ends and another person’s begins. It stops you from doing things for others that they should do for themselves.
- **A BOUNDARY** also prevents you from rescuing someone from the consequences of their destructive behavior that they need to experience in order to grow.
Setting ground rules before your child is oppositional

Decide together

- State your rules with clear simple commands. Ex. Follow directions without yelling
- Decide what should be the consequences if the rules are not followed
- Decide what could be a reward if the rules are followed

Stick to the consequences

- If your child thinks he or she will get away with misbehavior when you’re too tired to deal with it, they will continue to misbehave.
- Be consistent in every situation.
- If they break a rule, they get the consequence.
- They will test you, so be ready to always give the response that you both agreed on.
Direct Commands

- A command should be direct rather than indirect.
- A command should tell your child what **to do** instead of what **not to do**.
- Commands should be specific and brief, with one direction at a time.
- Avoid using their name before a sentence. This adds another demand, which is “look at me.”

- “Please sit at the table” instead of “Would you like to sit at the table?”
- Rather than saying “Stop running around,” say, “Please sit next to me.”
- Rather than saying “clean up your room,” say, “please pick up your trucks and put them in the toy box.”
- Praise them after each completed task.
Direct Commands

- Commands should be age-appropriate. Use simple words in a command.

- Commands should be polite and respectful.

- Commands should be explained with a reason before they are started.

- Choose your battles. Too many commands will frustrate them. Decide which ones are the most important.

- If a child doesn’t understand the words of a command, they sometimes act like they don’t want to do it.

- Rather than saying “I said NOW!” use “Please and thank you,” while keeping your voice quiet and firm.

- “We are going to the store, so please put your coat on.” If you say the reason after the command, an oppositional child may not even hear the reason because they are starting the argument.
After a command

- Five second rule – after giving a command, say nothing and count for 5 seconds. If your child has not started by 5 seconds, then it’s a disobey.
- Do not repeat the command or say anything until your child obeys or disobeys.
- If they obey, praise them right away.
- If they disobey, warn them about time out or their consequence. After 5 seconds, put them in time out or give the consequence.
Two-part choice statements

First, present the negative, or non-compliant, choice and its consequences

**If...**  
“If you do not work on your homework

**Then...**  
then you will not be allowed to watch TV tonight.”

Then state the positive behavioral choice that you would like your child to select

**If...**  
“If you finish your homework,

**Then...**  
then you get to choose what cartoon you want to watch on TV tonight.”
Ignore negative behavior unless it is destructive or aggressive

- This may decrease negative attention-seeking.
- The behavior may tend to escalate before it decreases. Your child may test your ability to keep your cool.
- Praise your child immediately for any positive behavior. If a negative behavior stops, look at the child with a friendly look and comment on what the child is doing that is the opposite of negative behavior: “I’m glad that you said that quietly.”

**Ignore Within Reason**

- Ignoring a negative behavior may be an effective behavior-modification technique
- Don’t ignore risky or injurious behavior, but ignore whining, nagging, arguing until these stop
- S/he can crave attention with these. Ignoring can be effective if done consistently. If he is increasingly loud if ignored, tell him gently that talk can resume when he is calm
Active ignore steps

Helps your child notice the difference between your responses to inappropriate and appropriate behavior

1) Stay quiet
2) Drop your eyes
3) Pick up something fun and describe what you’re doing. Make it look exciting and fun
4) Continue ignoring until your child is doing something appropriate
4) Return to the activity with your child if he or she is ready to follow the direction
If the behavior is aggressive or destructive...

The parent must stop the child and deal with it if the child is hitting, biting, breaking objects, throwing, kicking, etc.

Stopping them teaches them that positive behavior is needed for things like getting attention, listening to them, allowing them to choose, or play.

It shows your child that you are setting limits to their behavior.

Let them know what they did. “Video game time is stopping because you hit me.” Be specific.
If the behavior is aggressive or destructive...

Try redirecting their attention to another activity or removing them from the setting with time out or just a safe place to calm down.

If you catch them calming down, try rewarding their behavior with a verbal praise. “Good job calming down.”

You may also promise them a favorite activity. “You were able to calm down, so tonight we will watch your favorite movie.” Rewards that focus on together time like watching a favorite movie together or going to the park, can add to positive experiences with the parent.
Effective time-out

Time-out is the removal of a child from all types of reinforcement (e.g., parent attention, toys, TV) for a specified, short period of time as a consequence for misbehavior.

- Time out is a safe, effective way to help children regulate their behavior.
- Time-out teaches children that even when they misbehave, parents will treat them respectfully and consistently.
- Time-out works best with certain ages. Time-out can be used most effectively with children between the ages of 2 and 7 years.
- Keep time-out short. For children between the ages of 2 and 7, time-out does not need to exceed three minutes. However, make sure to end time-out only after the child is quiet for a few seconds. That way he/she will quickly learn that time-out ends only when he/she is calm and quiet.
- Time-out should be boring. Time-out works because a child has nothing to interest him/her. Remove any fun or distracting objects from the time-out space and avoid giving a child any attention.
- Time-out should be in a safe environment. Find a place where objects are out of reach. Make sure the time-out chair is safe. Parents should remain in a place where they are able to see their child in the chair, but should not make eye-contact.
- Time-out is not an escape. After a child sits in time-out, he/she should complete the task the parent originally asked him/her to do.
Setting limits

• Set up rules and consequences before child is upset – this avoids a spur of the moment rule or consequence that will set off their anger and opposition.

• Give them time to calm down a minute or two. Don’t expect them to be rational in the heat of the moment.

• Give them physical space if they are not doing something dangerous or destructive. Invading their personal space may give them a sense of you wanting to control them physically.
Know your child’s ability to complete a task

• What can they do within their limits and yours?

10 minute attention span

Needs occasional breaks

Complete homework

Math is not their strength

Needs some parent help

Calculate the reality of time it takes to complete a task

You want them to complete their homework in 1 hour

+ They need a break every 10 minutes

+ They struggle to understand Math

+ They need your help some of the time

= Compromised time to be finished
Once you and your child decide how long it should take to complete a task

Tell them you expect the task to be completed
- Agree on start time, breaks, and finish time
- Involving them in the rule setting and consequences give them a sense of power and choice
- Tell them what their consequences will be if not completed
- Tell them what their reward will be for completion

Be ready to give consequences or reward/praise for completions
- You must be willing to follow through on the consequence or reward every time. Otherwise your child will not take your request seriously.
- Praise should be specific. Ex. “Good job for picking up your clothes and putting them in the washer.”
Talking to your oppositional child

• Get to know your child – find out what they like and share experiences with them

• Allow them to set goals and decide together what will be the consequences if they don’t meet those goals

• Avoid asking them “why” questions. Use “who, what, where, and how” to start your sentences

• Avoid asking them many questions – they may feel interrogated, feel you’re not listening, or are disapproving of them

Use transition warnings to let your child know what is coming next. Here is an example, “In ten minutes it is time to turn off your video games and come eat dinner” or “After this show it is time for homework.”
Conversation suggestions

- Explain to your child that you will listen when they speak respectfully to you.
- Calm your child if they are yelling or whining.
- Listen for their main gripe between the whining or yelling.
- If it is a legitimate problem or request, let him/her talk.
- Don't interrupt until he/she finishes. Address concerns privately.
- Insist upon one rule- that you both be respectful.
- When decisions are needed, give two choices or options. Oppositional kids are more likely to complete or perform tasks that they have chosen. This also empowers them to make other decisions and helps them feel a part of the family.
Some non-threatening questions to ask them

**Suggested questions and statements**

- “What would work better?”
- “What could you have done differently to avoid the problem?”
- “How may I help you?”
- “What can I do to help you remember the rules?”
- Tell me what you think the problem is that keeps you from being successful at home.
Watch your body language and tone

- Do not stand over them or point your finger.
- Try to get eye-level even if you have to sit.
- Give them a warning/reminder look rather than an annoyed or angry look.
- Use soft, firm tone of voice.
- Use pauses to allow them a chance to speak.
- Slow your conversation down.
- Start with a soft reprimand reminder.
Things that will make your child more oppositional

- Threatening your child. “If you don’t get in the car, I’m going to slap you.”
- Responding emotionally (i.e., getting angry or sarcastic).
- Confronting your child near their peers.
- Remaining in the interaction too long.
- Bribes.
- Trying to "convince."
- "Putting down" your child.
Getting to know your child

It helps to know your child’s ability, communication style, and frustration level

• **TALK to children about feelings.** Teach them the names for feelings and talk to them about how you are feeling. For example:
  • “It makes me feel happy when you are nice to your brother.”
  • “I’m feeling sad right now because Grandpa is sick.”
  • “It made me angry when that man hit my car.”
  • “I’m feeling nervous because I really want to get this job.”

• Then **LABEL and VALIDATE their feelings.**
  • “You seem angry because I said no.”
  • Don’t assume you know what they are feeling so used “seem” or “appear” angry.
Getting to know your child

Reflect appropriate talk – it says, “I hear you.”

Reflection is repeating/paraphrasing what your child says: “Yes, that’s a blue crayon.”

Allows child to lead the conversation

Shows child you're really listening

Actually helps you learn to listen!

Shows you accept/understand what child is saying

Improves and increases child's speech and language

May feel awkward at first, but becomes natural pretty quickly
Getting to know your child

*Imitate* appropriate talk and play – it says, “I see you.”

If your child is playing, sit with him or her and engage in the activity.

This shows you approve of their behavior.

It also increases your child’s Imitation of you.

It improves their attention span.

It promotes healthy attachment.
Establish a rapport with your child

• If your child perceives you as reasonable and fair, you'll be able to work more effectively with him or her.

• Regardless of the situation do not get into a "yes you will" contest. Silence is a better response.
## Suggested Do’s and Don’ts

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<th>Do’s</th>
<th>Don’ts</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe what your child is doing when they are doing something positive – “We’re raking leaves together.” – it lets them know you are interested in their positive behavior</td>
<td>• Criticism and sarcasm – it gives attention to the negative behaviors</td>
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<td>• Reflect or repeat your child’s phrase – “I like to play this videogame.” “You’re having fun with that videogame.” – demonstrates understanding, interest, and increases verbal communication</td>
<td>• Use only negative words such as “no,” “don’t,” “stop,” “quit,” “not” – oppositional kids respond negatively to these words and it increases opportunities for conflict</td>
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<td>• Labeled praise – say specifically what you like about what your child is doing or saying – “Thank you for sharing your yogurt with me.”</td>
<td>• Ask many questions – may communicate parent is uncertain or not listening. Also may communicate parent disapproves of them</td>
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Routines and jump starting them can help

- Set a homework or chore around the same time every day
- Help them get started on their task by beginning it with them
- Use visual cues as reminders. “Please go get your pencils out of the pencil can.”
- Remember to praise when they obey
Praise

• Provide recognition when the child exhibits appropriate behavior.

• However, be aware that since many oppositional children feel compelled to do the opposite of what you want, avoid direct, lavish praise.

• Following a commendation, a child might retaliate by tearing up his/her work or by hitting someone.

• Acknowledge small steps toward improvement by whispering a positive comment to your child. Avoid expressing your feelings like, “I am so proud of you!” Instead say something like, “This is A+ work.”

Examples of Encouraging Statements

• “It’s so much fun to play with you - you are so good at sharing your toys.”

• “You were being such a great helper when you helped me bring the groceries inside.”

• “Thank you for using your inside voice when your sister was sleeping.”

• “Wow! You did such a great job picking up your toys tonight. You put everything in the toy box!”
Praise statements

- That’s a great way to....
- You’re doing a nice job of.....
- You should be proud of yourself for........
- I like it when you....
- What a wonderful idea to.......
- Thank you for........
- How sweet of you to...........
- I’m proud of you for........
- I’m so happy with you for..
- Super........
- I like it when you........
- It’s neat that you remembered to.....
- I love you.........
Rewarding the opposite

• Decide what behavior is the opposite of the problem behavior.
• Then give attention and praise to the good opposite behavior as much as you can.
• Try to spend some quality play time with your child. If they see that they can have fun with you, they may strive toward a more positive, happier relationship with you.
Privileges

- Set up expectations ahead of time and allow your child to earn privileges for following those expectations. This is much more effective for encouraging compliance than punishing your child or taking away privileges when they don’t do what you want them to do.
- Let your child have a say in what they want to work for. Allowing children to earn privileges puts the ball in their court. They know what is expected and they know what they have to do to earn the things they enjoy. They also feel a sense of pride when they earn what they worked for.
- When your child starts getting off track, remind him of what he is working towards rather than telling him what you will take away if he doesn’t listen.
- Research shows that children and adolescents are much more likely to do what is expected when they have the power to earn something, than when being threatened that you will take something from them.
Rewards

• Rewards can be simple and inexpensive
• Praise can be a reward also
• Stickers, tokens, or marks on a chart can let them see progress
• A few ideas for rewards: extra computer time, eating lunch with a friend, additional free time, special day with a parent to go alone with you to a fun place, sleepover at friend’s house

• Avoid promising expensive things like toys, money, and going to the movies
• If you have a time limit for TV or computer time, be cautious in giving extra time. They may begin to think that’s the new time limit.
More reward ideas

Rewards Coupons for Kids

- This coupon is good for: A sleepover party for up to 3 friends
- This coupon is good for: Staying up 30 minutes past bedtime
- This coupon is good for: Dinner of your choice
- This coupon is good for: Movie night! You pick the flick
- This coupon is good for: One hour of time alone with mom or dad
- This coupon is good for: Getting out of one chore
- This coupon is good for: Building a blanket fort
- This coupon is good for: Making a batch of your favorite cookies together
- This coupon is good for: A cup of hot cocoa
- This coupon is good for: Game Night! You choose the game
- This coupon is good for: One extra bedtime story
- This coupon is good for: Pajama Day!

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<th># TICKETS</th>
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<td>Ice Cream out</td>
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<td>Buy a BOOK</td>
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<td>DATE with MOM</td>
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<td>DATE with DAD</td>
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<td>Go to the PARK</td>
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<td>NEW TOY</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>PICK MOVIE</td>
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<td>Wii or 3DS game</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>Baking</td>
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Remember……

- Your oppositional child will tend to misbehave so set realistic goals and not unattainable ones
- Have clear expectations and firm boundaries
- Make sure your child knows your expectations and stick with performing consequences and rewards. This helps build trust.
- Change in routine will tend to upset them and affect their behavior
- Catch them in positive behavior and reward promptly
Remember......

• Believe in the child`s ability to manage his/her behavior in an appropriate way.
• Understand that you are not the cause of the defiance, only an outlet for it.
• Discover what the child truly enjoys doing such as participating in a sport or hobby.
• Identify skills or attributes that you can reinforce.
• Focus on only a few problem behaviors at a time. Decide what behavior you will ignore and what you will not accept. Communicate the consequences for those you cannot tolerate.
Channel your child’s oppositional energy in positive ways

• Let them join a sports team to release energy and learn to work together

• Involve them in community causes such as volunteer work to help save animals at a shelter
Take care of you

Oppositional children can be exhausting

• Don’t hesitate to ask for help

• If a relative or friend offers to take them for awhile, accept and then do something that revives you

• If you are always stressed, your child will pick up on that feeling and tend to also be stressed. Stress may add to his or her acting out.
When they are happy, playing, and following your rules

• Enjoy them!
• Play with them and let them lead the play
• Take a moment to appreciate them
• Keep hopeful that with diligent work today, they may improve tomorrow