



THE
HOUSSON CENTER
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

8100 Lomo Alto Dr., Suite 100 · Dallas, Texas 75225
Office: (214) 351-0053 · Fax: (214) 351-5581

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Children with **obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)** have intrusive thoughts and worries that make them extremely anxious, accompanied by rituals they feel compelled to perform to keep those anxieties at bay.

- **Obsessions:** Unwanted and intrusive thoughts, impulses, or images
 - **Contamination:** Children with this obsession are sometimes called “germophobes.” They worry about other people coughing or sneezing, touching contaminated surfaces or things that might be dirty, check expiration dates, or fear of getting sick. Contamination is the most common obsession that appears in children.
 - **Magical thinking:** This is a kind of superstition, like “step on a crack, break your mother’s back.” For example, kids might worry that their thoughts can cause someone to get hurt, or get sick. A child might think, “Unless my things are lined up in a certain way, mom will get in a car accident.”
 - **Scrupulosity:** This is when kids have obsessive worries about offending God or being blasphemous in some way.
 - **Aggressive obsessions:** Kids may be plagued by a lot of different kinds of thoughts about bad things they could do. “What if I hurt someone? What if I stab someone? What if I kill someone?”
 - **The “just right” feeling:** Some kids feel they need to keep doing something until they get the “right feeling,” though they may not know why it feels right. So they might think: “I’ll line these things up until it just kind of feels right, and then I’ll stop.”
- **Compulsions:** Behaviors or actions that kids actively do (ex: arranging objects in a certain way) or things done mentally (ex: counting in head or repeating phrases)

- **Cleaning compulsions**, including excessive or ritualized washing and cleaning
- **Checking compulsions**, including checking locks, checking to make sure a mistake wasn't made and checking to make sure things are safe
- **Repeating rituals**, including rereading, rewriting and repeating actions like going in and out of a doorway
- **Counting compulsions**, including counting certain objects, numbers and words
- **Arranging compulsions**, including ordering things so that they are symmetrical, even or line up in a specific pattern
- **Saving compulsions**, including hoarding and difficulty throwing things away
- **Superstitious behaviors**, including touching things to prevent something bad from happening or avoiding certain things
- **Rituals involving other persons**, including asking a person the same question repeatedly, or asking a parent to perform a particular mealtime ritual

Info from: https://childmind.org/guide/parents-guide-to-ocd/#block_64065efb170

Statistics

- OCD usually begins in adolescence and is seen in about 1 in 200 children and adolescents
- About 8 in 10 people with OCD experience their first symptoms by the age of 18

Symptoms (among others above)

- Fear of dirt, germs, or touching contaminated surfaces
- Doubts about household safety (ex: check if door is locked or windows are shut)
- Preoccupation with presentation, organization, or appearance (ex: symmetrical arrangement of things) and making sure things are “even”
- Anxiety about accidentally hurting a parent, friend, or sibling
- Superstitions that bad things will happen if they do not perform an unrelated behavior (ex: closing the door a certain amount of times)
- Avoidance of situations where the child believes “something bad” will happen
- Rigidity about bedtime or mornings

- Sexual orientation anxiety (worrying about being gay when you're straight or vice versa)
- Extreme cleanliness
- Need to repeat words or prayers to prevent bad things from occurring

Risk Factors for Children

- Family history of OCD
- Stressful life events
- Other mental health disorders

Treatment

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| <p>Therapy: many different types can help, including Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)</p> | <p>Medication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fluoxetine (Prozac) for adults and children 7 years and older. ● Fluvoxamine (Luvox) for adults and children 8 years and older. ● Paroxetine (Paxil) for adults only. ● Sertraline (Zoloft) for adults and children 6 years and older. ● Clomipramine (Anafranil) for adults and children 10 years and older. |
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How Can I Help My Child?

- Great strategies here: <https://childmind.org/article/kids-and-ocd-the-parents-role-in-treatment/>

Resources:

- [OCD Resources for Parents | OCD Treatment in Children | Child Mind Institute](#)
- [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder in Children | CDC](#)
- [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder In Children And Adolescents \(aacap.org\)](#)
- [Signs and Symptoms of OCD \(brainbalancecenters.com\)](#)
- [OCD in Teenagers: Signs, Treatment, and Giving Support | Psych Central](#)
- [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder in Children > Fact Sheets > Yale Medicine](#)
- [Helping a child with obsessive-compulsive disorder - Harvard Health](#)
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20354438>

Extra Helpful Resources (Books)

- *The Whole Brain Child* by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
- *How to Talk so Little Kids Will Listen* by Joanna Faber and Julie King
- *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
- *No-Drama Discipline; the Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture your Child's Developing Mind* by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
- *Breaking Free of Child Anxiety and OCD* by Eli R. Lebowitz, Ph.D.
- *Freeing your Child from Anxiety* by Tamar E. Chansky, Ph.D.