

## Editorial

# Only Child Syndrome

An only child is a person with no siblings, either biological or adopted. The term only child is generally applied only to those individuals who have never had siblings. Over the 20th century in particular, birth rates and average family sizes cut down sharply, for a number of reasons including increasing costs of raising children and more women having their first child later in life, increase in literacy rate among the women or increased number of working mother throughout the world in developed and as well as in developing countries including Bangladesh. The Only Child Syndrome (OCS) is obviously found in those kids who are the only child of their parents.

The name itself suggests that the kids are different from the others. It may sound very simple that a child is pampered and he or she behaves differently. However, it is not so simple indeed. The Only Child Syndrome (OCS) can cause serious complications in the lifestyle of a child. However, it has some positive aspects too. The kids who are having Only Child Syndrome sometimes also called "Spoilt" or "Pampered" in non-medical terms<sup>1</sup>. While many only children receive a lot of attention and resources for their development, it is not clear that as a class they are overindulged or differ significantly from children with siblings<sup>2</sup>. The characteristics of the Only Child Syndrome are deeper than they appear. In China, perceived behavioral problems in only children has been called the 'Little Emperor Syndrome'<sup>3</sup> the lack of siblings has been blamed for a number of social ills such as materialism and crime. However, recent studies do not support these claims, and show no significant differences in personality between only children and children in larger families<sup>4</sup>. The kid with Only Child Syndrome tends to remain isolated from the crowd and rest of the people. It gives a huge impact on the childhood which then carries forward to the adulthood as well. The child separates him or herself from the others and generally remains self-centered.

Wide range of characteristics may observe among these children, but not all features in a single child, may have one or combination of some of the features.

These can include :

- Wanting alone time.
- Difficulty in making joint decisions.
- Experiencing stress if they feel they are not succeeding.
- Relying on parents or may be strong independence or highly self-confident.
- A personal agenda for life and goals.
- Inability to ask for help.
- Sharing is not their thing. Or they have a tendency to be selfish.
- Tend to be more mature.
- Emotionally attached to things.
- Highly goal driven, perfectionist which is not a bad thing at all<sup>6</sup>.
- Only children are noted to have a tendency to mature faster<sup>5</sup>.
- Only Children: Lonely and Selfish?<sup>7</sup>.

Some important characteristics are:

- **Emotionally attached to things.** As they have no siblings, so whatever they had like toys are very dear to them. Only children attach themselves to things because of their lack of relationships with others. This type of behaviour is usually seen in the early childhood.
- **Goal driven.** Because their parents focused all their attention on their only child, that child is usually highly goal driven, which is not a bad thing at all. They most likely are on the top of their classes and completed every task at a high level. This type of behaviour is usually seen in during childhood or during adolescent period. This type of children may develop psychological problems due to continuous mental stress.
- **Overprotective parents.** Indeed, this part draws. Because they are an only child, their parents probably

freaked out every minute of the day, making sure their child is performing each and every activity with hundred percent accuracy. Because they only have one.

- **Inclines to be more mature.** Only children spend most of their time with adults like parents, grandparents. So, usually, only children are more mature due to their surrounding environment where they are in.

These characteristics are not always bad, but can cause friction with other family members, friends or spouse in married life. However, in the hands of someone who loves and appreciates an only child and their "syndrome", they can flourish and reach their goals standing next to the one who loves them. OCS now a day is an emerging problem in the society which needs study for further evaluation, management and better outcome of these children.

## References

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