

PDA STRATEGIES

Pathological Demand Avoidance is described as a profile of Autism. A low threshold of tolerance to a variety of "demands" results in a child reacting with a fight, flight or freeze response. Anxiety and a need to feel in control underpin a child's avoidant behaviour.

Demands may be explicit instructions or implied demands. Demands may be within the child's capability. Demands may be cued by environmental signals.

Reframing takes time, creativity, patience and empathy.



PANDA PRINCIPLES

- P** Pick your battles
- A** Anxiety Management
- N** Negotiation and Collaboration
- D** Disguise and Manage Demands
- A** Adaptation

FOUNDATIONS: RELATIONSHIP-TRUST-RAPPORT-RESPECT-FLEXIBILITY

SUPPORT SENSORY NEEDS

Provide individual sensory support to improve regulation and calming. Opportunities should be provided throughout the day and may include "heavy work" (increased proprioception). Reduce environmental demands.

DO THE TASK TOGETHER

Doing the task together can reduce the demand of the activity into achievable smaller parts. The child can watch how you achieve the task. IT also builds your relationship.

USE HUMOUR, NOVELTY OR MAKE THE TASK A GAME

- "Can we pack away these toys using our feet and not our hands?"
- Going to the toilet as a game may include walking like a robot to the bathroom. Make beeping noises that get louder.

ASK WITHOUT ASKING

Consider how you can rephrase a request. "The toys are on the floor and the storage bin is empty. We can fix that." rather than "You need to pack those toys away now".

REDUCE INDIRECT DEMANDS

This might include reducing the need to speak, reducing time expectations, reducing decisions to be made or reducing a component of the task (eg. writing).

INCLUDE A PUPPET (TOY OR PET)

Puppets can help with communication, demonstration, de-personalisation, provide an audience, ask for help or can be funny.

EXPLORE AND ENGAGE WITH THE CHILD'S INTERESTS

Further information

- [PDA Society](#)
- School Behaviour Secrets: [PDA Teaching Strategies Podcast](#)
- [YKOT article: When a child says No!](#)

THE GOAL OF RELATIONSHIP UNDERPINS EVERYTHING.



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