

What is PDA?

PDA is a profile of autism which involves the avoidance of everyday demands and the use of social strategies as part of the avoidance.

Key features of PDA profile (from 'What is PDA' booklet):

- Resisting and avoiding ordinary demands of life
- Using social strategies as part of avoidance
- Appearing sociable but lacking some understanding, which may mask underlying differences and difficulties in social interactions and communication
- Experiencing intense emotions and mood swings, as well as struggling to regulate feelings and emotions
- Appearing comfortable in role play, pretense and fantasy
- Focus intently, often on other people, and repetitive or restrictive interests
- Need for control driven by anxiety or automatic threat response in the face of demands
- Tendency not to respond to conventional approaches in support, parenting or teaching.

Remember that this is **not a choice**, and that avoidance is a natural human trait, which we all use to a certain degree for different reasons.

Positive PDA: Important not to focus on the list of 'deficits' and forget that we're all individuals. There are a huge number of strengths and positive qualities which accompany PDA.

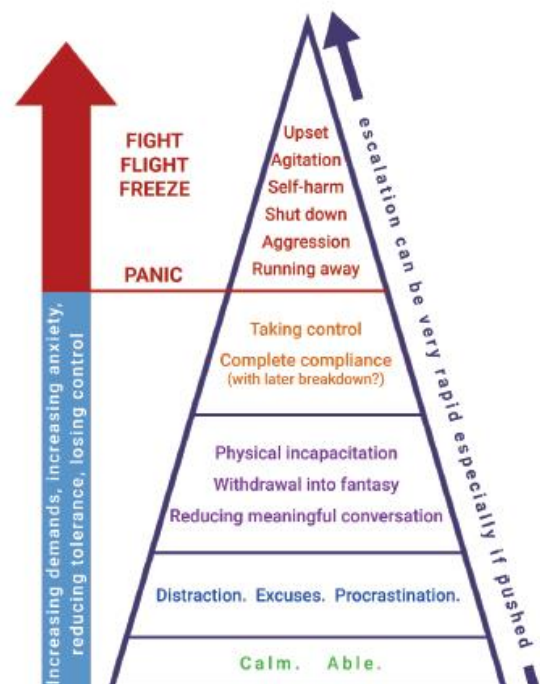
Diagnosis of PDA:

Under the umbrella diagnosis of Autism, a clear signpost to the PDA profile is helpful because it provides understanding and highlights the need for different approaches when providing support.

Over the last five years there has been an increase in the number of research papers written about PDA, however research remains limited.

For a detailed summary of diagnosis please see the PDA Society Website: [Diagnosing PDA – children – PDA Society](#)

What are Demands and the Hierarchy of Avoidance Strategies:



Strategies to Support:

There is no 'one size fits all approach' to PDA, helpful approaches need to be tailored to each individual to support them best.

It is sometimes useful to think of having a 'suitcase' of strategies to support the child or young person as PDA requires a flexible approach to help them reach their full potential.



5 golden rules:

1. Think ahead
2. Give the child advance notice
3. Monitor the child's stress levels and scale back demands
4. Create space
5. Keep calm

Strategies to avoid demand avoidance:

- Use indirect language
- Allow take up time
- Use the child's interests
- Give the child choices
- Use humour
- Use distraction



Signposting to Support Available:

- Enfield Advisory Service for Autism (EASA)
 - The website has lots of resources and opportunities for parents to go to a variety of different trainings
 - Parents Cuppa and a chat morning
- PDA society website (this is where information booklets from today are from, has lots of useful resources, webinars etc.)
 - <https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Positive-PDA-booklet.pdf>
 - [New What is PDA? booklet – PDA Society](#)
 - [PDA Society – Pathological Demand Avoidance – Part of the Autism Spectrum](#)

Information taken from the PDA society website, 'Positive PDA' booklet and 'What is PDA?' booklet.