

The PDA Society website is full of information and links to literature on PDA.

The National Autistic Society can sometimes help you with a befriender and they have an information leaflet on PDA too ([www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)).

Schools can find PDA very challenging sometimes. Training is available through the NORSACA group, who are based in Nottingham.

Siblings of children with PDA can find their brothers and sisters confusing and challenging and may need help to understand them. NORSACA have an excellent booklet for them.

Social workers may be required to help get respite if your child is very challenging.

You can claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for most children with PDA.

Medication can sometimes be appropriate for children with PDA. Your paediatrician can help with this.

Has your child recently been diagnosed with or do you suspect your child may have PDA?

Are you at a loss how to manage your child?

Do you need support from other parents?

Do you need information for school as to how to manage your child?



Go straight to the PDA Society website:

[www.pdasociety.org.uk](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk)

and the forum for more help, support and information:

[www.pdasociety.org.uk/forum](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk/forum)



## A Parent's Guide to Understanding Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome (PDA)

Children with PDA find being asked to do things (even simple everyday things) extremely difficult. They try to AVOID these DEMANDS. All children do this to some extent of course, but these children do this much more than is considered normal. This is why it is called PATHOLOGICAL.

In order to *avoid* these demands made of them, children with PDA will come up with all sorts of excuses:

“I’m too cold” “I’m too hot”

“I’m too poorly” “No...”

“My legs are made of lava”

“Just a minute...” “Look over there..”

“I can’t right now..”

“You do it...”

They may become very cross, agitated or aggressive and if the demands are pursued they may have a *meltdown*.

Children with PDA may be very outwardly sociable but they have subtle problems with this which will cause real problems in the playground.

Some examples of this may include that they:

Could be too bossy, and controlling.

Hug people too hard or get in their personal space too much.

Shout or scream if they don’t get their own way, or are not first in the queue.

May be happy one minute and angry the next (Jekyll and Hyde personality).

May say something odd or strange in public.

May become so involved in a game that they believe it is real and that they are someone else.

Can be very good at telling other people what the rules are but don’t often feel they apply to themselves.

Can become obsessive about certain activities to the exclusion of other things.

Managing children with PDA is not easy. The key to this is reducing demands and trying to allow them some control in a situation. For instance, give them some choices over things. You may need to practice ways of ‘asking’ without asking

e.g.:

“I wonder if you can help me do.....’

“Lets see if there is a way to do...”

“You can’t do this can you, I’m hopeless at it?”

“I bet you can’t do this before I come back....”

Making a game out of doing things can help especially if it also involves something they enjoy doing.

Realising the anxiety comes from the demands makes things a bit easier to understand, although not necessarily easier to deal with; as it challenges the traditional parenting methods which do NOT work for a child with PDA. But you will get better at this the more you practice.