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## Top 5 autism tips for professionals: supporting pupils with PDA

1. **Collaborate** – with the child, offering approaches that recognise their strengths; with families, recognising the particular issues that they face; and with colleagues in school and other agencies so as to have a co-ordinated approach.
2. **Prioritise which issues to deal with at any given time** - collaborate with others on deciding what the priorities are and which strategies will be used to achieve them.
3. **Promote wellbeing** – demand avoidance is driven by raised anxiety so reducing anxiety, promoting positive self-esteem, self-awareness and good social relationships is key.
4. **Use indirect approaches** which are creative, individualised and flexible, and which can be adapted to synchronise anxiety and demand.
5. **Allow additional processing time** – as with other people with autism it is beneficial to allow extra time to process incoming instructions, social and sensory information. For people with PDA it can also be beneficial to allow extra time to process their anxiety and sensitivity to demands. Giving time and space to do this will facilitate better wellbeing as well as better co-operation.

These top tips are meant only as a very general guide to what to think about. You can find further information on this subject below.

### Further reading

[Autism Education Trust: National Autism Standards](#)

[Christie, P., Duncan, M., Fidler, R., and Healy, Z. \(2012\) Understanding Pathological Demand Avoidance syndrome in children. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London](#)

[Christie, P., \(2007\) The Distinctive Clinical and Educational needs of children with PDA, Guidelines for Good Practice, Good Autism Practice Journal](#)

[Elizabeth O’Nions website](#)

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[Fidler, R., Christie, P., \(2015\) Can I Tell you About Pathological Demand Avoidance syndrome. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London](#)

Gore-Langton E & Frederickson N (2015) Mapping the educational experiences of children with pathological demand avoidance. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*.  
doi: 10.1111/1471-3802.12081

O'Nions E, Viding E, Greven CU, Ronald A & Happé F (2013) Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA): exploring the behavioural profile. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 8, 538-544.

O'Nions, E., Christie, P., Gould, J., Viding, E. & Happé, F. (2014) Development of the 'Extreme Demand Avoidance Questionnaire' (EDA-Q): Preliminary observations on a trait measure for Pathological Demand Avoidance. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55, 758-768.

O'Nions E, Gould J, Christie P, Gillberg C, Viding E. & Happé F. Identifying features of 'Pathological Demand Avoidance' using the Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO). 2015 *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*

O'NIONS, E., QUINLAN, E., SAN JOSE CACERES, A., TULIP, H., VIDING, E. & HAPPÉ, F. (submitted) Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA): an examination of the behavioural features using a semi-structured interview.

Gore-Langton E & Frederickson N (2015) Mapping the educational experiences of children with pathological demand avoidance. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*

[Pathological Demand Society](#)

Proposed research by Liz O'Nions and Institute of Psychiatry team in 2016 is to look into what management approaches are reported to be helpful in PDA by parents and teacher.