

Avoidance Behaviour

Children can find it difficult when a demand is placed on them due to a lack of control, triggering their anxiety. Often this is ordinary, everyday demands/expectations; this can present in several behaviours.

This is also recognised as Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA); however, this is not recognised as a formal diagnostic status in various regions, this includes Leicestershire.

What it looks like:

- Saying no
- Distraction & negotiation
- Excuses & delay
- Refusal
- Threats
- Entering role play
- Running away
- Aggression/impulsive behaviour
- Shutting down/isolating self
- Self-harm
- Shouting and screaming out
- Obsessive behaviour



Advice and Recommendations

- Consider a holistic approach and focusing on the child as whole.
- Explore their interests
Engage positively
- Pick your battles and offer choice and control.
- Limit rules and boundaries and the expectation of the child.
- Explanation of reasoning and accepting some things cannot be completed
- Adapting and being flexible within your approach
- Planning ahead and creating a plan B
- Building in extra time into activities
- Treat meltdowns as panic attacks
- Recognise anxiety and sensory/social difficulties



- Remain calm
- Collaborate and negotiate
- Trusting approach
- Use inviting and indirect language (see language support core strategy document)
- Work collaboratively to support child
- Use humour, distraction, and role play
- Balance the amount of give and take

Useful Links:

[Simple Strategies for Supporting Children with Pathological Demand Avoidance at school](#)

[Pathological Demand Avoidance Society](#)

[Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs](#)



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