

# Pathological Demand Avoidance: A Parent's Guide



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For permissions requests, please contact

Rebecca Garnsey @ [rebecca.garnsey@inspireaheg.com.au](mailto:rebecca.garnsey@inspireaheg.com.au)

Inspire Allied Health and Education Group PTY LTD

PO Box 275,

Camden NSW 2570

Australia

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PO Box 275,

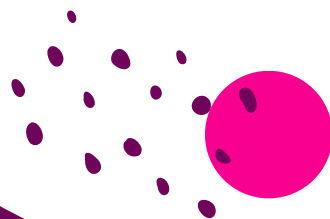
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# What is Pathological Demand Avoidance?

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Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is a profile on the Autism Spectrum that is characterised by an extreme resistance to everyday demands, leading to high levels of anxiety. It is essential to recognise the unique characteristics and challenges associated with PDA to provide appropriate support for individuals.



# Checklist for Parents: Characteristics of Pathological Demand Avoidance

- ✓ Extreme resistance to everyday demands.
- ✓ Difficulty with transitions and changes in routine.
- ✓ Control-seeking behaviour.
- ✓ Intense anxiety in response to demands.
- ✓ Superficial sociability.
- ✓ Difficulty with social understanding.
- ✓ Overwhelming need for control in situations.
- ✓ Creative and imaginative in their approach to play and learning.



# Diagnosis of Pathological Demand Avoidance:

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Pathological Demand Avoidance is often diagnosed through a comprehensive assessment by a multidisciplinary team, including a, Child Psychologist, Occupational Therapist and Speech Pathologist or Paediatrician. The process involves careful observation of the child's behaviour, history taking, and the use of specific diagnostic tools tailored for assessing PDA.



# If you Suspect Your Child has Pathological Demand Avoidance:

1. Seek advice from a trusted healthcare professional, including a Paediatrician, Occupational Therapist or Psychologist.
2. Keep a record of your child's behaviours and challenges.
3. Discuss your concerns openly with your child's school and any relevant support groups.
4. Educate yourself about PDA and its management strategies.



# Strategies for Children with Pathological Demand Avoidance:

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At Inspire Allied Health and Education Group, we use a range of strategies to support children with PDA. Some of these include:

- Using visual timetables and schedules.
- Allowing processing time for transitions.
- Incorporating the child's special interests into activities.
- Offering choices within structured limits.
- Implementing a consistent and predictable routine.
- Using clear, concise language when giving instructions.
- Creating a calm and sensory-friendly environment.
- Introducing relaxation techniques and mindfulness activities.
- Encouraging social interaction through shared interests.
- Practicing patience and empathy during challenging situations.

- Building trust and rapport through positive reinforcement.
- Using play-based learning to foster engagement.
- Implementing strategies to manage anxiety and stress.
- Encouraging independence through manageable tasks.
- Providing a safe space for emotional expression and regulation.
- Facilitating social skills training and peer interactions.
- Collaborating with educators to create a supportive learning environment.
- Utilising technology and assistive devices to aid communication.
- Providing regular opportunities for sensory input and regulation.
- Consistently monitoring progress and adjusting support strategies accordingly.

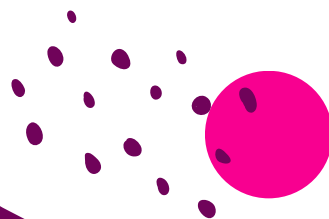


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Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) presents unique challenges for individuals and their families.

By understanding the characteristics and implementing appropriate strategies, it is possible to provide a supportive and nurturing environment for children with PDA. Collaboration with professionals, continuous education, and an empathetic approach are crucial in fostering the well-being and development of these individuals.

Please reach out to Inspire Allied Health and Education Group to find out how we can support your child and family.





# Contact

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**Phone Number:** (02) 4666 4255 / (02) 4648 0837

**Email:** [hr@inspireaheg.com.au](mailto:hr@inspireaheg.com.au)

**Website:** [www.inspireaheg.com.au](http://www.inspireaheg.com.au)

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