

AUTISM AND PDA PROFILE ADJUSTMENTS



EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS

Indirect language

Use indirect language to avoid demands such as:

- physical prompts – tapping a chair instead of saying ‘you need to sit down’
- visual prompts – in the order that things are done rather than a ‘first this, then that’ approach
- telling another learner what to do – ‘Please remember the rules about not running in this area’
- using role play – communicate through a favourite toy or by adopting the persona of a favourite character.

Rewards and praise

Understand that rewards and praise are not as effective for learners with a PDA profile as they can create additional demands or magnify when something isn’t achieved. Rewards and praise that may work are surprise rewards that are given immediately, rewards that are tangible (rather than stickers) and rewards that matter to the learner (linked to their special interests or free time to pursue an activity of their choice).



Boundaries and control

- Limit the number of boundaries and allow the learner to feel in control wherever possible.
- Allow the learner a sense of control and be prepared to negotiate (start high and allow the learner to feel that they have won).
- Pose open problem-solving questions to the learner and work on a collaborative solution together.



Talking to the learner

- Focus on results rather than the learner. For example: ‘what an informative piece of work’ rather than ‘well done for working so hard’.
- Use humour, distraction or novelty to create a change in direction that feels like a bonus or benefit for the learner.
- Provide choices, such as ‘would you like to use the whiteboard or the sand for your spelling?’ but ensure both choices are positive.
- Praise indirectly or to a third party in your learner’s earshot.