



# Recommendations in PDA

## Psychological Assessment vs Typical Autism Recommendations

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Instead of this:	Try this:
<p>CHILD will benefit from social skills programming which target social communication, changing communication to match context and needs of listeners, following rules for conversation, and understanding what is not explicitly stated.</p>	<p>While it can be helpful for children to understand the social rules of the neurotypical world, masking should not be encouraged, since it creates more problems later in life for autistic children, adolescents, and adults. <b>The child may benefit from an adult partner to help them make sense of the social world and build fulfilling relationships.</b></p>
<p>Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy is evidence-based and can support CHILD at home and at school (for a minimum of 25 hours).</p>	<p>CHILD would benefit from individual therapy with a practitioner who is knowledgeable about Autism and PDA. In therapy for PDA, an open, flexible, non-judgmental, emotion-focused, and relationally-oriented approach is likely to work best. <b>The therapist needs to focus on build a relationship. The child should not be forced into therapy.</b> CHILD also needs sufficient time to rest and play each day. <b>They most likely will need recovery time.</b></p>
<p>CHILD will benefit from opportunities to be successful in school and in other social settings. They should be encouraged with positive supports. Praise CHILD's effort rather than the final product.</p>	<p>For some children with PDA, praise can be anxiety-provoking because it can create a perceived demand based on expected performance. Offer authentic, positive feedback based on effort, but do not overdo it. <b>A low key, matter of fact approach can work as well as telling someone else about the student's success in their presence.</b></p>
<p>Request an IEP or continue to receive school services that are appropriate for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder.</p>	<p>Request an IEP or continue to receive school services that are individualized for CHILD's needs. This may include stipulations about homework, attendance, and executive functioning. School staff should receive education about PDA and efforts should focus on opportunities for self-regulation.</p>



Instead of this:	Try this:
<p>Utilize an FBA to determine the function of behavior problems and address antecedents and consequences which might be reinforcing behaviors. Use positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address behavioral difficulties.</p>	<p>Recognizing and understanding a PDA profile can be extremely beneficial in both understanding and intervening with <b>distress</b> behaviors and meltdowns. Perceived misbehavior often stems from significant anxiety and should be addressed as such rather than viewed as deliberate disobedience. <b>It should be understood that the behavior is a result of their nervous system going into fight or flight. They need to be given time and space to regain emotional regulation. Do not touch them, get too close, make demands or remind them of expectations.</b></p>
<p>To address sensory sensitivities and sensory differences, find appropriate accommodations for problematic stimuli.</p>	<p>Occupational therapy services with a provider who is knowledgeable about PDA can help with sensory processing. <b>An OT can work on interoception and increasing understanding of the child’s sensations and emotions.</b></p>
<p>Use Visual cues/picture schedules/checklists to help CHILD understand what is coming and give them a sense of structure. Provide advance notice of changes to CHILD’s schedule.</p>	<p>For children with PDA, too much attention to a schedule and far-advanced notice of upcoming events can be anxiety-provoking. Determine how much notice is “right” to meet the individual needs of the child and share information in an informative, non-emotional manner. <b>Allow the CHILD to collaborate in setting the schedule and give lots of autonomy.</b></p>
<p>Educate students and peers about autism so they can be peer buddies and better understand CHILD’s needs.</p>	<p>It can be helpful to share this information with students and peers so they can better understand neurodiversity and learn how to best support CHILD.</p>
<p>Modify length and content of assignments to ensure that they are appropriate to meet CHILD’s needs.</p>	<p><b>Most children who fit this profile dislike “busy work” and repetition of mastered work. Changing assignments to align with interests can be helpful.</b> After a full school day, CHILD needs time to relax and recuperate. Having daily homework can be problematic, especially when a simple worksheet can take much more time than is expected.</p>



Instead of this:	Try this:
Provide CHILD with preferential seating in the classroom to ensure that they have minimal distractions and maximum teacher attention during the school day.	Collaborate with CHILD to see where they feel most comfortable sitting. Some students may need to have an easy route for a break or escape. They may need to be on the edge of the group or another specific location for sensory reasons.
CHILD requires extra time for tests, assignments, and to turn homework in.	While this can be a helpful accommodation, just having more time is not sufficient but can be a useful component of a comprehensive system of support. Some work may also need to be excused.
Support groups and self-care can be helpful for family members.	Parents can best help with coregulation when they are regulated themselves. Self-care, social support and therapy can help maintain regulation.
Parents should keep their home life consistent and on a schedule. Routine is important for autistic children.	Routines and schedules can have both explicit and implicit demands, and CHILD will benefit from flexibility, autonomy, and improvisation.