



A Guide for Parents to Support the Siblings of PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) Children

Having a sibling with PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) can sometimes be confusing, challenging, and feel really unfair, but understanding how they think and what helps them feel safe can make a big difference. This guide will help you learn how to support and connect with your PDA sibling. This guide gives suggestions for how to talk to your non-PDA children about their sibling.

1. Help all your children understand PDA

- PDA is where a person has an extreme need to feel in control and often avoids demands—even ones they might usually enjoy.
- Your sibling isn't being 'bad' or 'difficult' on purpose; their brain reacts differently to requests and pressure.
- Anxiety plays a big role in their reactions, and when they feel unsafe or overwhelmed, they might have big feelings or meltdowns.

2. What Meltdowns Mean

- A meltdown is when your sibling's brain gets too overwhelmed, and they lose control. This is not the same as a tantrum and it's not them being bad to get their way or manipulate you or your parents.
- During a meltdown, they might yell, cry, get physically aggressive or run away. It can seem scary, but remember—**they are not mad at you**; they just feel too much all at once.
- The best thing you can do is stay calm and give them space.

3. How to Help Your Sibling Feel Safe

- Try not to tell them what to do. Even small requests might feel like pressure to them.
- If they say "no" a lot, it's not because they don't like you—it's their way of trying to stay in control.
- Instead of making demands, try asking, "Would you like to do this or that?" Giving choices helps them feel more in control.
- If they get upset, try using a quiet voice and giving them space. Loud voices or too many questions can make them feel worse.



4. Playing Together

- Your sibling might play differently than you. Sometimes, they love playing with you, and other times, they need time alone.
- If they like a certain game or topic (like Pokémon or dinosaurs), showing interest in it can be a great way to connect.
- If they get upset while playing, try saying, “Do you want to take a break and play later?” rather than telling them what to do.

5. When Things Feel Unfair

- Sometimes, your PDA sibling might need extra help from grown-ups, and that might feel unfair.
- It’s okay to have feelings about this! Make sure to talk to a trusted adult if you ever feel upset or left out.
- Remember, you are important too, and your needs matter just as much as your sibling’s.

6. Taking Care of Yourself

- Having a PDA sibling can be tough sometimes, so it’s okay to take breaks and do things that make you happy.
- Find a trusted adult to talk to if you ever feel frustrated, confused, or sad.
- Remember that you are doing a great job just by trying to understand and support your sibling!

Final Thoughts

Your sibling loves you, even if they don’t always show it in the way you expect. By being patient, giving them space, and learning how they think, you can have a great relationship. The most important thing is to remember that they are doing their best—and so are you!

This can be very hard but your kindness makes a difference!

Visit www.pdanorthamerica.org for more resources and information