

# 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PDA

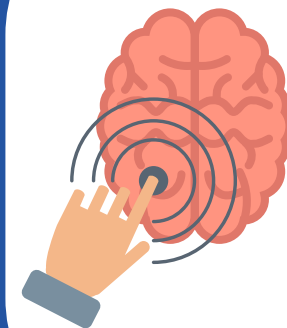
(Pathological Demand Avoidance)

*\* A quick-reference guide for parents and educators*



## PDA is a Protective Response to Anxiety

PDA isn't defiance—it's the nervous system reacting to anxiety from both internal and external demands.



## Demands Trigger the Threat System

Even simple requests can activate fight/flight/freeze. It's not a choice—it's neurological.



## Avoidance Is a Survival Strategy

PDAers avoid to feel safe. Avoidance may look like shutdown, silliness, refusal, or meltdowns.



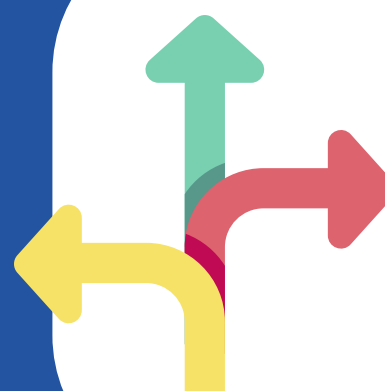
## Co-Regulation Calms the Brain

Connection—not correction—helps PDAers return from survival mode to thinking mode.



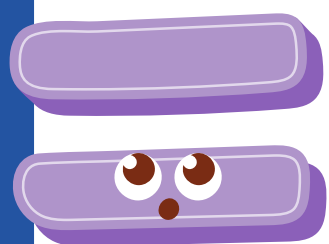
## Play and Trust Build Neurochemical Safety

Play, trust, and shared joy reduce anxiety and help grow demand tolerance over time.



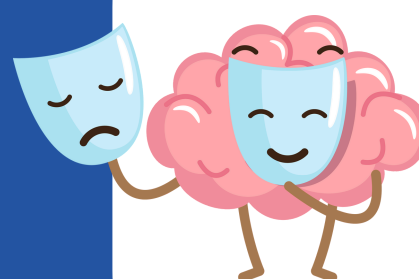
## Autonomy is a Core Need

Choice reduces pressure. A/B options or indirect language support nervous system safety.



## Equality is Deeply Important

PDAers often resist if they feel "less than." They seek equal footing in relationships.



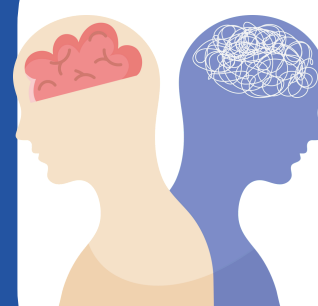
## Equalizing Can Be Playful

Role play, humor, and "us vs. the system" games can reduce hierarchy and increase connection.



## PDA is an Autism Profile

PDA sits within the autism spectrum, often alongside sensory and executive functioning differences.



## It's Not Personal

PDA reactions aren't about you. They're attempts to escape anxiety—not attacks on authority.