

Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)



Illustration by @megan_k_stone
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Strategies

- **Be honest & transparent** Children with PDA pick up on dishonesty and ways adults seek to get around them
- **Be flexible**; Have a Plan A, B, C
- **Use humour** Diffuse anxiety and tension
- **Use indirect praise** With the child in earshot, talk to someone else about how well they've done
- **Avoid asking a myriad of questions**
- **Allow the child some control** "do you want to do this work in class or in soft play?"
- **Use trust-based language**
 - ♥ Language that is less threatening
 - ♥ Depersonalise the request e.g. "as part of school policy I've been asked to"
 - ♥ Instead of "should/need to" use "could" or "is it ok if"
 - ♥ Empathy statements e.g. "I know you find this really hard"
 - ♥ Share responsibility e.g. "let's", "we", "together"
 - ♥ Offer choices

PDA is
anxiety-
based