

The Parenting Pandas Guide to Understanding PDA



A compassionate guide for parents and carers



SUPPORT • NAVIGATE • THRIVE

Parenting
PANDAS



Welcome I'm Becky



I am the founder of Parenting
Pandas UK.

These guides were created to help
families understand the psychology
behind behaviour, reduce
overwhelm and build connection
through compassionate, evidence-
informed support.
I'm so glad you're here.

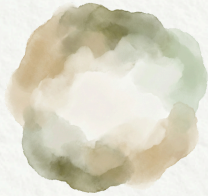


You are not alone in this

Small changes, made with understanding
and consistency, can make a big difference



What you will learn in this guide



Understand what PDA is and why demands feel threatening



Explore the nervous system and threat responses



Learn how co-regulation supports safety and connection



Discover practical strategies you can use every day



Feel more confident, supported and empowered as a parent

What is PDA?



PDA, Pathological Demand Avoidance, is a neurodevelopmental profile. It is often diagnosed as a profile of Autism, however research is evolving which is making us wonder if PDA can exist without Autism.

For individuals with PDA, it means that they experience difficulties with everyday demands and expectations, which can trigger an anxiety response.

It is not about **choosing** to be difficult.
It is about **a nervous system that feels under pressure.**



REMEMBER

Behind every behaviour is a nervous system trying to feel safe.



The Psychology Behind It



When a child perceives a threat, their nervous system shifts into **survival mode**.

The thinking part of the brain, (prefrontal cortex) becomes less accessible.

The body prioritises safety over flexibility, reason and co-operation.



THIS IS WHY....

- ✓ Logic may not work in the moment
- ✓ Consequences can increase distress
- ✓ The more pressure applied, the more threatened they feel
- ✓ Co-regulation helps them return to a place of safety

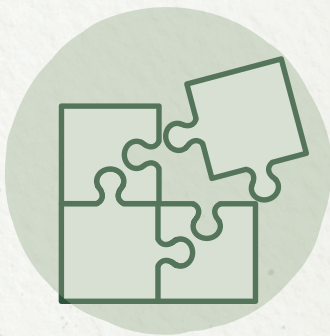


Try This



Reduce the demand

Lower demands and give choices where possible



Offer connection

Focus on relationship before problem-solving.



Allow time

Give space for their nervous system to settle.

"You don't need to get it right every time"

Connection over compliance,
every time.

Take a Moment to Reflect



Consider these questions:



What situations tend to be hardest for my child?

.....

.....



What signs do I notice when my child is becoming overwhelmed?

.....

.....



What helps my child feel safe?

.....



What small change could I try this week to support them?

.....





Key Takeaways



PDA is a nervous system response, not a behaviour choice.



Demands can trigger anxiety and threat responses



Co-regulation helps children feel safe and connected



Small, consistent steps create lasting change.

Remember...

You know your child best.

Trust your instincts.

You are doing an incredible job.



With Love and Support,

Becky

Parenting Pandas UK

