

# ASST'S SEND NEWSLETTER



## Welcome

Welcome to the spring edition of our termly SEND Newsletter. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey attached to our autumn edition, your feedback has already helped shape this newsletter and will continue to guide future editions.

In this issue, you will find a guide to SEND provision, a spotlight on PDA, and a range of resources and support to help you and your family. We hope it keeps you informed and offers practical ideas and information you may find useful.

Spring 2025/26  
Zoe Clancy, ASST's SEND Strategic Lead



## What is SEND Provision?

SEND provision refers to the adaptations, support, resources and interventions that schools put in place to help children with SEND access learning, feel included and make progress. Provision is tailored to individual needs and may change over time. Support does not always require a diagnosis or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

In our schools, SEND provision is delivered through a graduated approach, meaning support is carefully matched to need and reviewed regularly. This follows the cycle of assess, plan, do and review, which is used when a teacher identifies the need to introduce or adapt SEND provision for a child.

### Universal support- Everyone

This is high-quality, inclusive teaching and classroom practice that all children receive every day. It is planned by the class teacher and embedded into lessons and routines. Many children with SEND benefit from strong universal support alone.

Examples may include:

- Clear routines and expectations
- Visual supports and scaffolding
- Flexible seating or movement breaks
- Differentiated tasks and teaching approaches

### Targeted support- Some

This is more structured support for children who need additional help beyond universal provision. It is often in groups, time-limited and reviewed regularly.

Examples may include:

- Small group interventions
- Lego Therapy
- Nurture Group
- Additional adult check-ins

### Specialist support- Individual

This is highly personalised and designed specifically for one child, based on their unique strengths and needs. It may be longer-term and often involves specialist advice.

Examples may include:

- Individual support plans
- Specialist equipment or resources
- Input from external professionals

# SEND SPOTLIGHT: PDA

Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is widely understood as a profile within the autism spectrum. It is characterised by high anxiety, an overriding need for autonomy, and demand avoidance, where a person finds it difficult to manage everyday tasks or demands, even those they want or need to do.

## HOW PDA MAY PRESENT IN CHILDREN

**Avoiding Everyday Demands:** They may avoid everyday demands, even tasks they want or need to do. Expectations such as getting dressed, starting work, or answering a question can trigger significant anxiety, as demands are perceived as being threats to their autonomy and will make them feel out of control.

**A Sociable Relationship Style:** They may appear socially confident and engaging, enjoying conversation and interaction, which can mask underlying anxiety and difficulties with demands. They are often highly sensitive to others' words, tone and emotions. Even well-meaning comments (e.g. "Please be good today") may feel like expectations and add pressure. Some may also struggle to understand social rules or hierarchies.

**Using Social Strategies to Avoid Demands:** They may use a range of social strategies to avoid demands, such as distraction, negotiation, humour, role play, changing the subject, or making excuses. These creative strategies can effectively delay or avoid tasks. If they are unsuccessful, anxiety may escalate into panic responses such as shutdown, aggression, or running away.

**Intense Emotions and Mood Changes:** They may experience intense emotions and sudden changes in mood. When anxiety becomes overwhelming, they may appear distressed, angry, or shut down, often linked to feeling a loss of control or pressure from demands.

**People-Focused Interests:** Like many autistic individuals, children with PDA may have strong interests. These interests are often focused on people, relationships, or characters, and they may become deeply absorbed in these topics or activities.

## HOW CAN I HELP?

- Use a low-demand approach where possible.
- Build connection and trust, as feeling safe with adults is key.
- Offer choices (e.g. "Would you like to do X or Y first?" or "Would you like to sit here or here?").
- Use challenges, games or races (e.g. "I bet you can't finish before me!").
- Praise indirectly, as direct praise can feel uncomfortable (e.g. "I can't do that, it's amazing you can!").
- Explain reason for requests, otherwise they may feel pointless (e.g. "We wear seatbelts to keep us safe.").
- Be cautious with reward systems as they can increase anxiety if they feel controlling.
- Avoid speaking in a patronising way, as some children may not recognise hierarchy or authority.
- Allow low- or no-demand time after school so they can decompress and 'empty their bucket.'
- Focus on the anxiety behind the behaviour, not just the behaviour itself.
- Maintain consistency between adults.

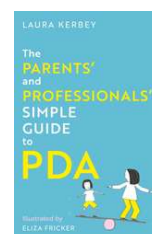
## PDA SUPERPOWERS

- Strong sense of fairness and justice
- compassionate and empathetic
- Independent and autonomous
- Creative and imaginative
- Charismatic, funny, and sociable
- Tenacious and determined

## READ MORE



Helpful guides



A book for parents and professionals.



A book for children aged 7+



## Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Support

Suffolk's new Well Minds booklet is now available online and in libraries across Suffolk. The Well Minds booklet is packed with useful information, advice, helplines and services for adults and young people in Suffolk who may be struggling with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

You can pick up a printed copy from your local Suffolk library or can scan the QR code to view.

SCAN ME!



**Family Fund**  
Helping disabled children

Family Fund Grants Family Fund Trust offer various grants to families of disabled children and young people to purchase things like family breaks, computers and tablets, sensory toys, games consoles, outdoor play, days out, games, books and music, specialist trikes / bikes, clubs, hobbies and activities.

SCAN ME!



Suffolk SENDIASS provides free, confidential, and impartial support to families of children with SEND, helping them understand their rights, navigate EHCPs, access resources, explore options, prepare for meetings and work effectively with schools and local services.

Phone: 01473 265210

## . Comets (ITFC Foundation)



Comets is an inclusive recreational football programme for disabled children (physical, learning or neurodiverse) aged 5 to 16, with the aim to improve sporting and social skills, as well as self-esteem and confidence.

The sessions provide a safe space for disabled children to play football, one that's all about playfulness, friendships and having fun

When & Where: Fridays, 4:15 pm - 5:00 pm  
Location: Portman Road, Ipswich, IP1 2DA  
Cost: £1 per session  
Booking / Contact: [lauren.revill@itfcfoundation.co.uk](mailto:lauren.revill@itfcfoundation.co.uk)

## A SEND Shout Out!

We would love to hear about any special moments you'd like to celebrate, whether your child with SEND has achieved something incredible or a staff member has gone above and beyond to support them. Please share your story via the QR code.



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*"Every child has the right to thrive, learn, and be celebrated for who they are. Inclusion is not just a policy, it's the heart of everything we do."*