



- 1 Any parent who feels that their child (born after 1st June 2002) may have a disability can apply for an Assessment of Need as stipulated under the Disability Act 2005. An application can also be made by a legal guardian or a personal advocate assigned by the Citizens Information Board. Apply:  
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/disability/disability-assessment/application-for-assessment-of-need-2017.pdf>
- 2 When a parent discovers PDA either online at a course/conference or through word of mouth it is usually a light bulb moment.
- 3 Your child is not bold, he/she is often in a highly anxious frame of mind which can be terrifying for them.
- 4 You are not a bad parent, in fact quite the opposite, you are an amazing parent. PDA requires a totally different style of parenting that you will question (and so will your friends, family and schools). While strategies suggested for PDA may appear totally different to the strategies more regularly recommended for Autistic Children, they often do work.
- 5 Seek support from other parents / peer support groups online and in person who have been / are going through some similar challenges with services/schools etc. They can be a great source of practical and emotional support.
- 6 PDA is a dimension of the autism profile and there are no separate diagnostic assessment instruments. You can consult with the team conducting the ASD diagnosis and ask them to explore this profile.
- 7 Request a 'hello and welcome' letter from the clinician prior to attending a first appointment. This should be addressed to the child, adolescent or adult with PDA and include an image of the setting, and a brief outline of what will happen.
- 8 If you feel your child needs mental health support, Consult the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Standard Operating Procedures which provide information on their service procedures:  
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/camhs/operational-guideline/>
- 9 Create a brief profile of your child to take first meetings with clinicians or practitioners. You might find it helpful to complete the 'What PDA means to me' resource together  
<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/resources/what-pda-means-to-me-resource-by-sally-russell/>
- 10 Identify a specific person in school who understands / is knowledgeable about demand avoidance, and whom your child trusts. DEIS schools have a Home School Liaison Coordinator who can be a useful contact point and bridge between school /teaching staff and home.

- 11 Provide teachers/support staff that you come across with a copy of the PDA society guidelines for health and education professionals:

<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/pda-awareness-matters-booklet-2016-revised-edition-web-version.pdf> and

- 12 <https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/working-with-pda-menu/info-for-education-professionals/>

If you have a scheduled meeting with the school, write out a bullet point list of items to be discussed, and take a copy for each person attending the meeting. After the meeting, summarize agreed actions, and send a copy to each person who attended the meeting. Request a copy of any meeting minutes taken by the school.

- 13

Identify and discuss the challenges experienced by your child or adolescent in the school environment. Are there key adjustments that can be made by all staff that come into contact with him/her, that will ensure a good school experience and prevent anxiety, stress and response to overload:

<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/life-with-pda-menu/family-life-intro/>

- 14

Consult the school policy, guidelines and procedures on exclusion and suspension. If you believe that your child is being excluded via reduced timetables, contact your local Education Welfare Officer:

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-parents-and-guardians/school-attendance-what-every-parent-needs-to-know/>

- 15

If a school decides to suspend or exclude your child against your wishes, you can appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

- 16 Request a review of the Student Support Plan (SSP) and profile (formerly known as an IEP) at the beginning of each school term. Bring external expertise from Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Educational Psychologist if appropriate.

- 17 Where applicable, request a multi-agency 'Meitheal meeting' which is a case co-ordination process bringing together a range of expertise, knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the child and family within their community.

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/guidance-documents/>

- 18 In situations where the educational placement has become unsustainable, parents are advised to seek advice on alternative educational pathways which are structured, resourced, supported, organised, and appropriate to meet individual needs. This may have implications for future educational options. Further information is available from:

Citizens Information [https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/the\\_irish\\_education\\_system/home\\_education.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/the_irish_education_system/home_education.html)

- 19 Additional advice for parents is available from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

<https://ncse.ie/for-parents> and the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Information-for-Parents.html>

- 20 Your local Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) can be found at <https://ncse.ie/regional-services-contact-list>