



PDA Provider Interview Questions

Finding the right team for your child

Choosing the right providers for a PDA child matters enormously. A provider who uses compliance-based approaches, reward/consequence systems, or who has limited autism understanding can cause harm rather than help. These questions help you identify whether a provider is genuinely PDA-informed before you commit to working with them.

Questions for Occupational Therapists

- "Do you have experience working with children with PDA profiles? What does that look like in your practice?"
- "How do you structure sessions to accommodate demand avoidance? What happens if the child refuses to participate?"
- "Do you use a child-led or therapist-directed approach? How does that vary for anxiety-based presentations?"
- "How do you communicate with families between sessions? What does a typical reporting process look like?"
- "Are you familiar with the Window of Tolerance and co-regulation approaches?"

Questions for Psychologists and Counsellors

- "What is your approach to anxiety-driven avoidance? Do you use exposure-based approaches?"
- "Are you familiar with PDA as a profile? How does that change your therapeutic approach?"
- "Do you use any reward/consequence systems in your practice? If so, how do you adapt these for PDA?"
- "What happens when a child refuses to engage in a session?"
- "How do you work with the family alongside the child?"

Red flag responses to watch for

"We use a reward chart system consistently with all children." / "If they refuse, we wait them out until they comply." / "PDA isn't a recognised diagnosis — we treat it as behaviour." / "The child needs to learn that they can't always be in control." / "Consequences are important for all children, including PDA."

Questions for Support Workers

- "Have you supported children with autism or PDA before? Can you describe what that looked like?"
- "How do you handle it when a child refuses to do something?"
- "What does a good session/outing look like to you? How do you define success?"
- "How do you communicate with parents about how sessions went?"
- "Are you comfortable with a very child-led, flexible approach?"



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Questions for Support Coordinators

- "Are you familiar with PDA? Have you supported families with PDA children before?"
- "Do you know which local providers have PDA experience?"
- "How do you handle provider conflict or poor fit? Have you supported families through provider transitions?"
- "How often do you meet with or contact families? What does ongoing support look like?"

Positive Signs in Any Provider

These responses suggest a good fit

- "We follow the child's lead — compliance is not our goal."
- "We adapt our approach based on the child's needs each session."
- "We see refusal as information, not defiance."
- "We work with the child's nervous system, not against it."
- "We're happy to learn more about PDA alongside you."

It's okay to say no If a provider gives you red-flag responses, it is completely appropriate to continue looking. A poor provider fit for a PDA child can set back progress significantly. Taking the time to find the right team is worth it.