Top 5 autism tips for professionals: supporting pupils with PDA

1. **Collaborate** – with the child, offering approaches that recognise their strengths; with families, recognising the particular issues that they face; and with colleagues in school and other agencies so as to have a co-ordinated approach.

2. **Prioritise which issues to deal with at any given time** - collaborate with others on deciding what the priorities are and which strategies will be used to achieve them.

3. **Promote wellbeing** – demand avoidance is driven by raised anxiety so reducing anxiety, promoting positive self-esteem, self-awareness and good social relationships is key.

4. **Use indirect approaches** which are creative, individualised and flexible, and which can be adapted to synchronise anxiety and demand.

5. **Allow additional processing time** – as with other people with autism it is beneficial to allow extra time to process incoming instructions, social and sensory information. For people with PDA it can also be beneficial to allow extra time to process their anxiety and sensitivity to demands. Giving time and space to do this will facilitate better wellbeing as well as better co-operation.

These top tips are meant only as a very general guide to what to think about. You can find further information on this subject below.

**Further reading**

- [Autism Education Trust: National Autism Standards](#)
- Elizabeth O’Nions website

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Proposed research by Liz O’Nions and Institute of Psychiatry team in 2016 is to look into what management approaches are reported to be helpful in PDA by parents and teacher.