

# Top Tips

## for Managing

## Pathological Demand Avoidance



- Have clear, simple and explicit ground rules in the classroom. Let them see that these rules are fair and consistent.
- Justify your expectations - for example, by referring to Health and Safety rather than making personal demands.
- Get to know the child so that you are aware of his/her anxiety triggers, what interests them and how they are motivated.
- Be aware of what avoidance strategies the child has developed and counteract these before they occur.
- Give indirect and non-confrontational requests, such as “I wonder if someone could give out the books?”, “I don’t know how to do this, do you?” or “Can this table do question 5?”
- If you see that the child is not coping well with what you are asking of them, change the dynamics of the activity. You may make an independent task into group work, for example.
- Have a ‘safe area’ where the child can go to be quiet and safe if they are feeling out of control. Encourage them to use this space if they feel they are struggling to control their emotions.
- If the child is overcome by emotion, remain calm and quiet, giving them reassurance, time and space to calm down.