



**Online learning  
for parents,  
carers and  
professionals**

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The Lightbulb Moment PDA and Underwing

Present:



# Advocating for your PDA child

Autism Learns:  
PDA

16–17 July 2021



# Today's Agenda



1

Introduction to the Session

4

Getting the EHCP right

2

Leanne and Francesca – a bit about us

5

What support is needed while on the EHCP journey?

3

What does it mean to advocate for your child?

6

Getting the right school



# A little bit about us

## Leanne, founder of The Lightbulb Moment PDA



I live in Yorkshire with my family. Teacher with over 15 years experience and most recently worked in a specialist provision. I have two girls, the youngest has a PDA profile of Autism. Following her diagnosis, it quickly became clear that it wouldn't be the key to simply unlocking doors to support, understanding or an educational setting she could thrive in.

Alongside caring for my daughter, I am the founder of The Lightbulb Moment PDA, I blog about family life and support families who find themselves in similar circumstances.

## Fran, founder of Underwing & Shaping Your Future



Business strategist with Underwing by day, PDA advocate by night. Mum to Roberto, 12, PDA.

After discovering PDA in 2014 I made it my life mission to make it known in Italy, starting the first blog/vlog, FB group in Italian. Since 2018 I help families, schools and professionals getting to grips with PDA and finding strategies for a happier life.

I am also the founder of Shaping your Future, where I help young adults with special educational needs find their path in life.

# Our Journey to Date

LEANNE

- \* 2 year old check
- \* Speech & Language drop In
- \* Reading and research
  - \* Our Lightbulb Moment \*
- \* Private diagnosis
- \* Breakdown of school placement
- \* EHCP tribunal
- \* Today



# Our Journey to Date

- \* "A difficult child"
- \* Exclusion
  - \* Our Lightbulb Moment \*
- \* Private diagnosis
- \* Breakdown of school placement
- \* EHCP tribunal
- \* Today



# Let's get started!



# Advocating for your child

## AKA : Never Give Up

Every child has the right to a happy, nurtured life. In first world countries, every child has the right to be educated. This is, in fact, a legal requirement for parents, who face serious consequences if their children fail to attend school.

For many special needs parents though, providing children with an education can turn into a battle. Many schools are not geared up to care for children who require more effort or attention than others, and teachers, often through lack of training or knowledge, are unable to provide the necessary support.

Advocating for our children when this happens means to provide a clear, detailed information about our children's conditions and needs, together with a very clear explanation of what is required to make sure the correct support is offered, their education doesn't suffer, and they get the happiest school experience.

Unfortunately, more often than not this process falls on the parents' shoulders.  
So how do we do it effectively ?



# Advocating for your child

AKA : Never Give Up

1. Know your child and his/her needs
2. Produce an EHCP plan which incorporates all needs to be met
3. Seek extra help
4. Finding the right school
5. Never Give Up!



# KNOW YOUR CHILD

And put that knowledge to good use. :)



**1** Take notes, keep a diary

**2** Notice patterns, triggers, needs

**3** Don't be afraid to correct people – yes, even professionals!

**4** Remember that you are doing this for your child

**5** Oversee all processes, be involved with the writing of all documents

**6** Ask your child for his/her opinion

# Understanding the EHCP process

1. Don't wait
2. Ipea Model letter
3. Experience of staff and funding available
4. IEP's
5. Refusal to assess
6. Appeal/mediation – low threshold
7. Monitor LA reports – do they reflect your child accurately?
8. How were assessments conducted?

Sometimes, you  
will be labelled  
as "the crazy  
parent"

You know your  
child best!

ONE extra  
check can  
make all the  
difference!

# Understanding the EHCP process

9. Considering Private Assessments?
10. Are all needs listed in Section B?
11. Are provisions linked to each of these needs?
12. Quantified, specific outcomes of differing timescales.
13. Examples ....
14. Check final thoroughly
15. Appropriate named school?
16. Appeal/Tribunal
17. Mediation Certificate
18. Preparing evidence
19. Advocate support

Don't think you  
are putting "too  
many needs in"

Remember you  
are asking for  
something  
that's NEEDED,  
none of this is a  
tantrum!

Your child is  
ENTITLED to be  
somewhere  
where his/her  
needs are met.

SELF CARE FOR  
CHILDREN AND  
PARENTS

LEGAL ADVICE

A COMMUNITY OF  
LIKE MINDED  
PEOPLE

OCCUPATIONAL  
THERAPY



**EXTRA  
SUPPORT**  
- What's  
needed?

HELP AS A COUPLE

SPEECH  
THERAPY

SUPPORT IN  
COMMUNICATING  
WITH THE CHILD

CORRECT EXTRA  
ASSESSMENTS

HELP FOR AND WITH  
THE SIBLINGS

AN INFORMED  
SCHOOL



# FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL



1

No one size fits all or perfect setting for PDAers

2

Provision should be based on trusting relationships

3

Offer of flexibility

4

Visit and build rapport with staff

5

What's your gut feeling?

6

Experience of working with other PDA children

# FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL



7

What helpful approaches do they use to support?

9

Accommodating spaces

11

Therapies – SLT, OT

8

Child's freedom of expression

10

Uniform

12

Regulation

# FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

Collaborative

Understands  
anxiety and  
masking

Child-led  
focus

Listens  
and  
Connects

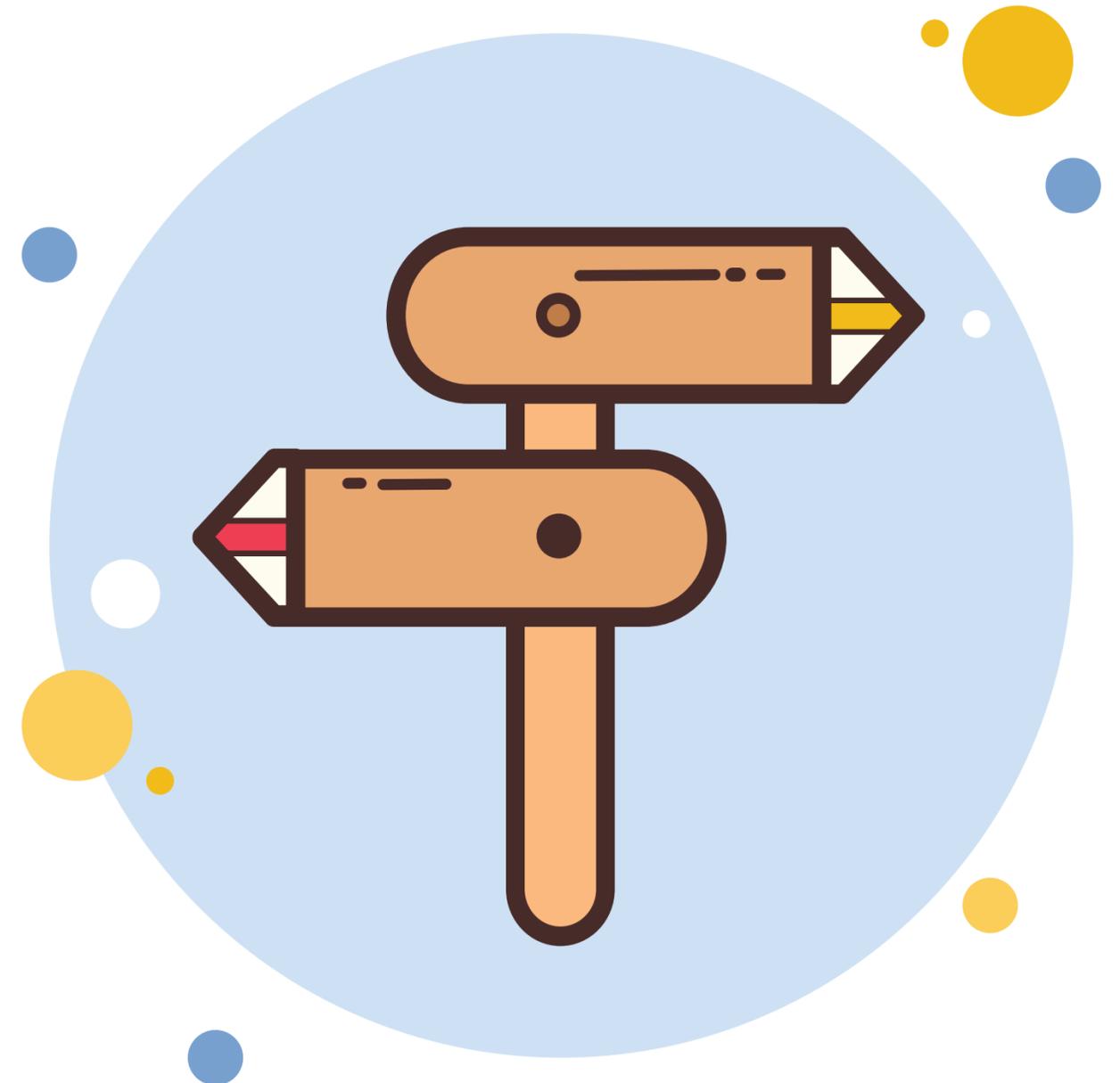
Flexible

Provides  
individualisation



# Signposting

- The PDA Society
- IPSEA
- NICE Guidelines
- The Lightbulb Moment PDA
- Underwing Liverpool
- Shaping Your Future CIC



Questions?





# Contacts:



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