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1

## Working with PDA children rather than against them

Clare Truman



2

## What I am talking about today



Following the child's lead



Prioritising and presenting demands



Negotiation and collaboration



Following the child's lead (again)

3

## Following the Child's Lead

“an instinctual desire to be free”

Thompson 2019



4

## Following the Child's Lead



The children will teach us how to care for them  
or teach them if we let them.

5

## Prioritising and Presenting Demands



6

## Prioritising Demands

- Sit around a table with everyone who supports and cares for the child and a pack of post-it notes.
- Write every demand on a post-it note.
- Sort them on the table according to how important they are.



7

## Minimal Groundrules

### At Spectrum Space...

We keep everyone safe.

We help each other enjoy activities.

We don't make people do things they don't want to do.

We follow the legal rules: no hurting, no threats, no damaging other people's things.



Spectrum Space

8

## Presenting Demands

How NOT to present demands...



9

## Presenting Demands

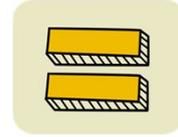


How to present demands...

10

## Presenting Demands

Approach the conversation as equals.



Invite don't insist.

Accept "no" where you can.



Remember, saying please doesn't remove the demand.



11

## What about in adult life?

We are preparing PDA children for life as PDA adults so we need to empower them to articulate their needs in a way that is likely to be understood and responded to.

e.g. rephrasing "Go Away!" as "I need some space"



12

## Negotiation and Collaboration



13

## Negotiation and Collaboration

- Think of it as upskilling
- Don't enter into the negotiation if you are not prepared to give and take on the issue.



14

## Negotiation and Collaboration

Can the child help you write the schedule for the day?

Can the child choose from two options for the next task?



15

## Collaboration

Can the child help you solve a problem?

*"I'm not sure how we are going to get all this shopping into the bag."*



16

## Collaboration and Distressed Behaviour

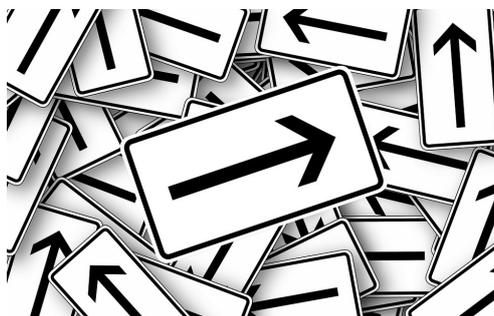
What can we do to make this easier for you?

This is a legal rule. How can we make it easier for you to follow?

I recommend: [www.livesinthebalance.org](http://www.livesinthebalance.org)

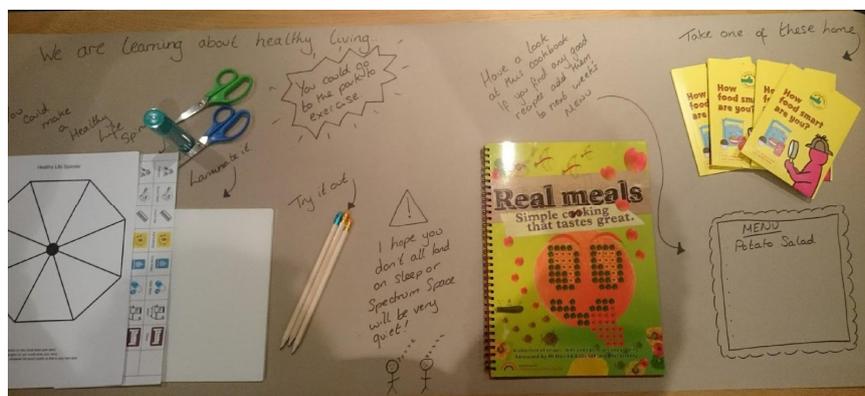
17

## Following the Child's Lead



18

## Invitations to Learn at School



19

## Invitations to Play at Home



20

Curriculum Area & Termly Target	"Small Step" Learning Objectives	Suggested Activities and Resources <i>(These are only suggestions and can be adapted to follow Grace's interests and motivations)</i>
<b>Cognition and Learning - English</b>  <b>Target:</b> Use basic punctuation correctly (e.g. full stops, capital letters, question and exclamation marks)	To be able to recognise full stops, question marks and exclamation marks.	Using any reading material Grace chooses and a highlighter pen, highlight all the examples of punctuation. Grace could choose to highlight these herself or direct an adult to highlight them for her.
	To be able to match the above punctuation marks to their purpose.	An adult to write the purpose of different punctuation marks on whatever writing surface Grace chooses (e.g. on the playground in chalk, on the whiteboard in marker, on paper with a glitter pen, on a scratch art board). Grace could add the punctuation marks to match the purpose or direct an adult to do it for her.

21

“Grace did not want to do the highlighting task as she said using highlighters on the magazine would ruin it, she then ran out of the classroom onto the playground so we had to work with chalk on the ground instead. She refused to write anything down or hold the chalk so I had to do all the writing. Grace got annoyed with me when I put the wrong punctuation at the end of the sentence and corrected what I had written by telling me what I should have written instead.”

22

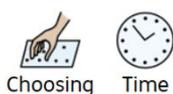
## Reframing Learning

“Working with chalk on the playground, Grace was able to correct the punctuation at the end of my sentences. She correctly identified when I needed to include a question mark, a full stop or a capital letter. She found it difficult to identify situations when I could have used an exclamation mark.”



23

## Add your own idea...



24

## Give Me Feedback

“I’m not sure which of these tasks work and which ones don’t – could you do me a favour and use the post – its to let me know”



25

## Contact Details

[www.spectrumspace.co.uk](http://www.spectrumspace.co.uk)



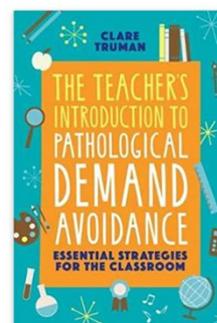
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26