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WHAT IS DEMAND AVOIDANCE?

Regular difficulty following everyday demands; often because the child needs to feel safe and in control. The child is NOT choosing to do this.

LOOKS LIKE...

- An obsessive need to be in control
- Avoiding participation in activities, even ones they like
- Using humor or distraction to avoid tasks
- Strong emotional reactions- crying, screaming, running away

Demand Avoidance



BRAIN REACTIONS

The brain takes every demand as a threat, and the child feels like they are in danger. This causes their brain and body to go into “alarm mode”. They feel like they need to fight to survive.

IS NOT...

- Naughty behavior
- Purposefully ignoring you
- Trying to make you mad
- Enjoying saying no or acting this way for fun



THERAPY...
AND A WHOLE LOT
MORE!

DEMAND AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES

REFRAME REQUESTS

- “Is it okay with you if...?”
- “How do you feel about...?”
- Act as a character they like!
 - “Buzz Lightyear says everyone needs shoes before they go to space.”
- “Do you feel like you need a movement/brain/fidget break?”

USE STATEMENTS

- “I wonder if you’re strong enough to help me carry this.”
- “It looks like it’s raining. we might need our coats today.”
- “I was thinking it would be fun to go to the park today.”

USE CHOICES AND GAMES

- “Do you think you can get dressed in less than five minutes?”
- “I bet I can get my shoes on faster than you.”
- “Do you want to do this upstairs or downstairs?”
- “Do you want to use your tablet for 10 or 15 minutes?”

PROVIDE SUPPORT AND PRAISE

- “Let’s do this together.”
- “I can’t wait to tell (therapist, teacher) how well you’re doing.”
- Focus on the behavior- “it looked like the spelling test went well.”

