



Supporting Autonomy: Our Approach

Our Philosophy

This is how support young people in our sessions:

- Led by the learner's pace and preferences
- We guide gently, without directing
- Activities are shown, not instructed
- Children choose their actions, unless safety is a concern
- We repeat things as many times as needed, even if it feels repetitive

It looks like this:

- A child choosing not to engage for a while
 - Making unique or unexpected choices
 - Saying no to help, even when it appears needed
 - Not encouraging participation unless it's initiated by the child
 - Holding back on help unless directly asked
 - Respecting uncertainty without pressuring a decision
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Ways You Can Support

- Avoid commenting on unusual or unexpected choices
 - Don't prompt for decisions if they're unsure
 - Let them take the lead when they're ready
 - Only offer assistance if they ask for it
 - Don't worry about them being 'rude' - it's ok
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How We Communicate

<p>We avoid judgment</p> <p>No evaluations like "good job" or "you were so brave."</p> <p>We don't ask questions that pressure responses.</p>	<p>We skip praise like "well done"</p> <p>Instead, we acknowledge: "You stayed with it," or "That looked hard."</p> <p>We don't ask: "Did you enjoy it?" or "Was that fun?"</p>	<p>We give space and time</p> <p>Silence or neutral observation is okay.</p> <p>We allow space for natural reactions.</p>
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Our Focus

- Observing rather than judging
- Staying present without steering
- Honouring independence and fostering connection gently

We want our young people to feel safe, seen and heard.

We are asking them to take risks - social and emotional risks - so this approach is their safety net. Please support us - and them - by allowing them to take the lead, even if it might feel uncomfortable sometimes.

This gentle, non-directive approach creates emotional safety and encourages trust for PDA learners, especially those with trauma histories.