Journal of Neurodevelopmental Cognition

Supplementary File 1

Initial Screening Checklist for a Pathological Demand Avoidance Profile

English translation of the 26-item Persian development version

Purpose. This checklist is intended for targeted initial screening when a child in autism assessment, educational, or intervention services shows unusually severe demand avoidance, pressure-linked escalation, or progress markedly below demonstrated ability. It supports decisions about whether broader clinical formulation and PDA-focused assessment are warranted. It is not a diagnostic instrument.

Definition. PDA/EDA refers here to a proposed and contested profile in which ordinary expectations evoke severe and inflexible avoidance, varied strategies to escape or control the demand, loss of functioning, or emotional escalation as pressure rises. PDA is not a standalone DSM or ICD diagnosis.

Responding. Consider the previous six months using information from parents, teachers, therapists, records, and direct observation. If the pattern has been present for less than six months, complete the checklist and record the actual duration. The six-month window standardises reporting and is not a diagnostic duration criterion.

Child code/pseudonym: _____	Age: ____ years ____ months
Respondent: Parent / Teacher / Therapist / Other	Date: ____ / ____ / ____
Settings observed: _____	Information sources: _____

A. Direct demand-avoidant features

Code	Item	Response
S01	The child severely avoids ordinary everyday requests or expectations to the extent that interaction is disrupted.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
S02	The child uses varied strategies to avoid demands, such as delay, changing the subject, excuses, negotiation, role-play, withdrawal, silence, or not responding, to the extent that interaction is disrupted.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
S03	The child's response becomes more intense when insistence, repetition, monitoring, or pressure increases.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
S04	When faced with a demand, the child may stop functioning, freeze, become silent, escape, cry, become angry, or show severe distress, making continued interaction difficult.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
S05	The child persists in resisting the demand and shows little flexibility in maintaining interaction with the person presenting it.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
S06	When a demand is presented, the child shows signs of anxiety, helplessness, resistance, opposition, or distress.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain

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Code	Item	Response
S07	This pattern has negatively affected education, daily care, family relationships, intervention, or school attendance.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain

B. Competence-performance discrepancy and reversibility

Code	Item	Response
R01	The child avoids demands that are within their ability and are not inherently difficult or unpleasant.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
R02	After an activity becomes a direct request, the child refuses or becomes unable to perform something they can do.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
R03	The child sometimes resists or avoids preferred activities or their own personal needs.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
R04	Performance under a direct request is markedly lower than the ability shown in free, familiar, or self-initiated conditions.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
R05	When adults do not insist, offer genuine choice, or change how the request is expressed, the child performs the same activity substantially better.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain

C. Temporal course

Code	Item	Response
T01	How long has this pattern been observed?	Record duration/course or Uncertain
T02	Has the pattern been present during most weeks of the previous six months?	Record duration/course or Uncertain
T03	Has its intensity been relatively stable, variable, increasing, or decreasing over time?	Record duration/course or Uncertain
T04	Did the pattern begin or intensify around a specific event, such as changing school, starting an intervention, illness, family stress, or an adverse experience?	Record duration/course or Uncertain

D. Variation across settings and people

Code	Item	Response
C01	Avoidance differs between parents or family members; with some people it is absent or the child is more cooperative.	Absent / Mild / Moderate / Severe / Not observed or uncertain
C02	Avoidance at nursery/school differs from avoidance at home; in some settings it is absent or the child is more cooperative.	Absent / Mild / Moderate / Severe / Not observed or uncertain

Code	Item	Response
C03	Avoidance differs across assessment, teaching, or intervention sessions; in some conditions it is absent or the child is more cooperative.	Absent / Mild / Moderate / Severe / Not observed or uncertain
C04	Avoidance differs across social gatherings or public settings; in some conditions it is absent or the child is more cooperative.	Absent / Mild / Moderate / Severe / Not observed or uncertain
C05	Avoidance intensifies with unfamiliar people or people in authority compared with familiar people.	Absent / Mild / Moderate / Severe / Not observed or uncertain

E. Variation by demand type or delivery

Code	Item	Response
D01	Avoidance intensifies during educational tasks.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
D02	Avoidance intensifies when a preferred activity is interrupted.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
D03	Avoidance intensifies when the demand includes observation or evaluation of performance.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
D04	Avoidance intensifies when the demand is accompanied by praise, reward, or repeated instructions.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain
D05	Avoidance decreases when the child chooses or initiates the activity.	Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost always / Uncertain

Interpretation and next step

Do not calculate a diagnostic total. Interpret the pattern across five questions: Are severe avoidance and distress linked to demands? Does direct pressure reduce access to demonstrated ability? Is the pattern persistent? Does it vary meaningfully across settings, people, or modes of delivery? Could another clinical, medical, sensory, communication, learning, or environmental explanation better account for the pattern?

Provisional pathway	Recommended action
Pathway 1	Continue the usual service pathway with monitoring; current evidence is insufficient for PDA-focused assessment.
Pathway 2	Information is insufficient or a PDA/EDA profile remains plausible; collect additional multi-source information and conduct broader clinical assessment.
Pathway 3	While assessment is completed, avoid escalating pressure and temporarily review how demands are delivered.

Final caution. If concern remains, use multi-informant assessment, clinical interview, observation

across environments, and—where linguistically and clinically appropriate—EDA-Q or EDA-8 as complementary measures. This checklist alone must not determine diagnosis, major treatment changes, or withdrawal of intervention.