Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)™

What is PECS™?

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)™ was developed in 1985 by Andy Bondy, PhD and Lori Frost, CCC/SLP. PECS™ is based on the principles of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) and is divided into six phases that teach communication through distinct teaching, reinforcement, error correction and generalization strategies (Bondy & Frost, 2002).

Who can use PECS™?

PECS™ was originally developed for preschool-aged children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) however, is presently used with variety of children and adults with a variety of communication disorders.

Why might your child use PECS™?

PECS™ closely parallels typical language development in the sequence of skills taught. The PECS™ protocol is divided into six phases that progress from teaching children how to communicate using pictures in a manner that is important to the child, to the use of multiple sentences, and then to a variety of communication functions.

When could your child use PECS™?

For the best success, PECS™ should be implemented in a variety of settings including home, school, and the community to promote generalization.

The six phases of PECS™:

1. The Exchange
2. Distance & Persistence
3. Discrimination
4. Using Phrases (Sentence Strips)
5. Answering a Question
6. Commenting

Before implementing PECS™, remember to:

1) **Assess** – What is your child motivated by? What is your child's visual recognition level? (e.g., objects, actual photos, picture symbols, line drawings)?
2) **Goal** – What is the specific goal for your child in each phase of PECS™?
3) **Strategies** – How will you teach to reach each specific goal?
4) **Monitor** – How will you know if your child is ready to move on to the next phases?

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References:

Bondy, A. & Frost, L. (2002). *The Picture Exchange Communication System: Training Manual*.
   Newark, DE: Pyramid Educational Products, Inc.

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