

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Efficacy Rating
Level #2

An intervention for teaching functional communication within a social context (e.g., requesting) using inherent non-social rewards (i.e., getting the requested item)

What is it?

A functional communication program that circumvents problems typically associated with traditional communication program that require prerequisite attending, motor & verbal imitation skills, pointing, having a listener to respond to a point or sign, etc. It is grounded in behavioral and communication principles that effectively use reinforcers via the application of requests situations vs. labeling situations; begins & emphasizes spontaneous communication; avoids prompt dependency; & doesn't require intensive training prior to initiation. The primary goal is functional, spontaneous communication.

What are the components?

Six phases used to establish communication:

Phase I: Physical Exchange
Phase II: Expanding Spontaneity
Phase III: Picture Discrimination
Phase IV: Sentence Structure (using "I want")
Phase V: Responding to "What do you want?"
Phase VI: Responsive & Spontaneous Commenting
(e.g., I see __, I have __)

Efficacy:

- Case study of a NV 36-month-old & 7 year old with ASD; began using speech in conjunction with PECS during 4th month of TX (Bondy & Frost, 1994)
- 66 preschool children using PECS for 1 year; 25 children used speech & pxs; 41 used speech alone; 76% developed speech (Bondy & Frost, 1994)
- Frequency of spontaneous language & duration of social interaction with peers for a 6 year old with autism using PECS (Kravitz et al., 2002)
- 20 children with autism & other learning difficulties; all but 1 used PECS to request; 11 used sentence strips; 9/20 verbalizations; 7 use words (Liddle, 2001)
- 31 children (3 to 6 years; 16 with ASD); all learned PECS with various partners within 3 to 28 months (Schwartz et al., 1998)
- 6 children (55 to 70 months, 5 with ASD); all learned PECS within 6 months & spoken language, eye contact & use of each other's names (Webb, 2000)
- 3 children with ASD mastered PECS rapidly & words & grammar (Ganz & Simpson, 2004 etc).

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Resources and Information

References:

Frost, L. A., & Bondy, A. S., (2002). *The Picture Exchange Communication System Training Manual* (2nd edition). Newark, DE: Pyramid Educational Products, Inc.

Websites:

<http://www.pecs.com/>

Tools, Materials, Curriculum:

CD-ROM to use in Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

<http://www.helpingtogrow.com>

PECS goals, IEP objectives & research

<http://www.pecs.com/>

Articles:

Bondy, A. (2001). PECS: Potential benefits and risks. *The Behavior Analyst Today*, 2, 127-132.

Bondy, A.S., & Frost, L.A. (1993). Mands across the water: A report on the application of the Picture Exchange Communication System in Peru. *The Behavior Analyst*, 16, (1), 123-128.

Bondy, A.S., & Frost, L.A. (1994). The Picture Exchange Communication System. *Focus on Autistic Behavior*, 9, (3), 1- 19.

Bondy, A.S., & Frost, L.A. (1998). The Picture Exchange Communication System. *SSL*, 19, (4), 373-388.

Bondy, A.S., & Frost, L.A. (2001). The PECS. *Behavior*, 25, (5), 725-744.

Charlop-Christy, M.H., Carpenter, M., Le, L., LeBlanc, L.A., & Kellet, K. (2002). Using the PECS with children with autism: Assessment of PECS acquisition, speech, social-communicative behavior, and problem behavior. *JABA*, 35, (3), 213-231.

Ganz, J. B., & Simpson, R. L. (2004). Effects on communicative requesting and speech development of the Picture Exchange Communication System in children with characteristics of autism. *JADD*, 34 (4), 395-409.

Kravitz, T.R., Kamps, D.M., Kemmerer, K., & Potucek, J. (2002). Brief report: Increasing communication skills for an elementary-aged student with autism using the Picture Exchange Communication System. *JADD*, 32, (3), 225-230.

Liddle, K. (2001). Implementing the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 36, 391-395.

Schwartz, I.S., Garfinkle, A.N., & Bauer, J. (1998). The Picture Exchange Communication System: Communicative outcomes for young children with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 18, (3), 144-159.

Tincani, M. (2004). Comparing the Picture Exchange Communication System and sign language training for children with autism. *FADD*, 19 (3), 152-163.

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