

PECS: (Picture Exchange Communication Systems)



What is PECS?

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a communication strategy designed, originally, for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. PECS focuses on the initiation of communication, which is accomplished by selecting the appropriate picture from a variety of options and then handing pictures to others to receive desired items/activities. There are six phases of learning in PECS, with each phase becoming more complex in skill than the prior phases.

Top 5 Reasons to use PECS:

1. PECS is a system that allows individuals to communicate by using pictures either instead of, or in addition to, speech.
2. PECS is a functional communication system that allows individuals to express their wants and needs.
3. PECS has been used in individuals who are as young as two, and has been successful with adults as well.
4. PECS focuses on teaching initiation as opposed to simply teaching individuals to respond to the communication bids of others.
5. PECS gives individuals a more appropriate way to express themselves, which often reduces the reliance on inappropriate behaviors (e.g., aggression, screaming) as a form of communication.



What are the Six Phases of PECS?

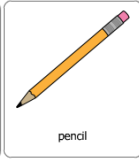


Phase I. How to Communicate

The learner is physically prompted to give a picture card to access a desired item. The physical prompting is faded out and the learner begins to independently give picture cards to gain items.

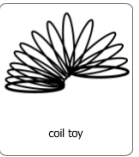
Phase II. Distance and Persistence

The learner begins using a book of picture cards with one card on the cover. The learner is prompted to get the book and bring it to the communication partner from increasing distances and with fewer supports.



Phase III. Discrimination

The individual begins having to select the appropriate picture card from a set of 2 cards. One card depicts a desired item and the other a non-desired item. Over time, the learner must select the correct card from a variety of options.

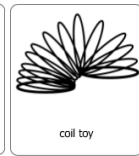
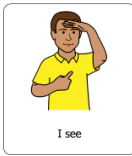


Phase IV. Sentence Structure

The learner is prompted to select a sentence starter (e.g., "I want") along with the picture of the desired item. The learner gives the sentence strip (containing both cards) to the communication partner. The partner reads the full sentence aloud and gives the desired item.

Phase V. Answering

The learner begins answering the phrase "What do you want?"



Phase VI. Commenting

The learner begins using sentence starters to comment (e.g., "I see") to begin communicating for social reasons, not just to request.

How Can I Learn More?

Books and Articles

- Bondy, A. & Frost, L. (2011). *A Picture's Worth: PECS and Other Visual Communication Strategies in Autism. Topics in Autism*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House
- Collet-Klingenberg, L. (2008). *PECS: Steps for implementation*. Madison, WI: The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, The Waisman Center, The University of Wisconsin.
- Frost, L., & Bondy, A. (2002). *The Picture Exchange Communication System Training Manual*. Newark, DE: Pyramid Educational Consultants.

Website

- www.pecs.com

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