

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

What is PECS?

The Picture Exchange Communication System, or PECS, allows people with little or no communication abilities to communicate using pictures. People using PECS are taught to approach another person and give them a picture of a desired item in exchange for that item. By doing so, the person is able to initiate communication. A child or adult with autism can use PECS to communicate a request, a thought, or anything that can reasonably be displayed or symbolized on a picture card. PECS works well in the home or in the classroom. There have now been several studies that have shown PECS actually helps people develop verbal language, can decrease tantrums and odd behaviors and allows for increased socialization.

PECS was developed in 1984 by Lori Frost, MS, CCC/SLP and Dr. Andrew Bondy. It was first used at the Delaware Autistic Program. The goal of (PECS) is to teach children with autism a fast, self-initiating, functional communication system. PECS begins with the exchange of simple icons but rapidly builds "sentence" structure.

The Six Phases of the Picture Exchange Communication System Are:

PECS PHASE I: How to Communicate

The child with autism learns to exchange single pictures for items or activities they really want.

PECS PHASE II: Distance and Persistence

Still using single pictures, the child with autism learn to generalize this new skill by using it in different places, with different people and across distances. They are also taught to be more persistent communicators.

PECS PHASE III: Picture Discrimination

The child with autism learns to select from two or more pictures to ask for their favorite things. These are placed in a communication book, a ring binder with Velcro strips where pictures are stored and easily removed for communication.

PECS PHASE IV: Sentence Structure

The child with autism learns to construct simple sentences on a detachable sentence strip using an "I want" picture followed by a picture of the item being requested.

PECS PHASE V: Answering Questions

The child with autism learns to use PECS to answer the question, "What do you want?"

PECS PHASE VI: Commenting

Now the child with autism is taught to comment in response to questions such as, What do you see?, What do you hear? and What is it? They learn to make up sentences starting with I see, I hear, I feel, It is a, etc.

Contact Person for PECS in Bangalore

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Brief Bio-sketch of Director: Vanitha S. Rao has just finished working on her doctoral thesis in the Department of Psychiatry at St. John's Medical College Hospital. After a Master's Degree in Human Development, she got two diplomas in special education in the field of learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorders before starting her career in a developmental clinic. She has nearly 2 decades of experience teaching children with autism and as a teacher trainer for professionals working in the field of autism. She is also a Member of the Board of Studies for the Diploma in Autism being conducted at KPARMC in collaboration with KSOU. She has several research papers to her credit. **Certified in PECS.**

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