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PICTURE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (PECS)

- **What is PECS?**

The **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)** is a unique augmentative/alternative communication system that allows children with communication deficits to initiate communication with others. It helps individuals quickly acquire a functional means of communication within a social context.

- **Who is involved in PECS?**

The implementation of **PECS** is overseen by a person who has attended the full “**Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Basic Training**” course hosted by Pyramid Educational Consultants.

Another person involved in **PECS** implementation is a communicative partner (e.g., teacher, therapist, parents, siblings, peers, etc.). The communicative partner entices and interacts with the child. A physical prompter is typically only needed during Phase 1 of **PECS**. The physical prompter prompts the child from behind and does not interact with the child in any social manner. The physical prompter is systematically fading the prompts. The communicative partner and the physical prompter are under the guidance of the trainer.

- **How does it work?**

PECS has been successful with individuals of all ages who have a wide array of communicative, cognitive, or physical challenges. It uses pictures (and written words) to help children communicate.

When first learning to use **PECS**, the child is given a set of pictures of favorite foods, toys or other desired objects. When the child wants one of these items, he/she gives the picture to a communication partner. The communication partner then hands the child the food or toy. By doing this, the child initiates a communicative act for a concrete outcome within a social context.

PECS will not prevent your child from verbally communicating if your child is capable of using verbal communication. The child begins to use **PECS** less as he or she is able to communicate more freely.

- **What are the goals of PECS?**

The primary purpose of **PECS** is to focus on the initiation component of communication to enhance our children's independence and use of successful, initiated communication. The goal is for the child to use communication and/or natural speech as he/she begins to comprehend the usefulness of communication.

- **Requirements to begin:**

The only prerequisite to **PECS** implementation is identification of a powerful set of reinforcers. This is the most critical element to the success of **PECS**. Prior to the first session, pictures to represent those reinforcers must be created or purchased.