

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)



What is PECS?



PECS is a communication system, which uses pictures or symbols to help a child communicate their wants and needs.

PECS is designed to help children who find it difficult to initiate communication and may also have limited spoken language. The main goal of PECS is to teach functional communication.

Research has shown that PECS can help a child to develop spoken language.

Who can use PECS as a system to Communicate?



PECS can be used with anyone who has communication needs. It has been shown to be effective in supporting children who might have a specific diagnosis such as Autism, Downs Syndrome or learning disabilities.

How long will PECS be used?



Each child's journey is different.

For some children, PECS is a successful long term method of communication.

Some children start off with PECS and move on to using PECS alongside spoken language.

Some children may progress to using only speech as their main way of communicating.

Other children may use alternative systems of communication such as visual boards or communication technology.

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What are the benefits of PECS?



- It teaches the power of communication and develops spontaneous communication.
- It teaches a child to initiate communication with familiar adults and peers.
- It teaches functional communication so that the child can request what they need or want. This can help to reduce frustration when a child has difficulty communicating.
- Pictures are universal, therefore can be easily understood by anyone the child is trying to communicate with.
- It encourages the child to develop spoken language, as speech is modelled alongside every exchange.
- PECS can be used alongside other approaches aiming to support the development of interaction and communication skills in children.

Common Misconceptions

Use the QR Code below to read more about PECS- Myths and Misconceptions:



***“PECS is only for children with autism”*: NOT true.**

Facts:

PECS is for anyone with a communication difficulty no matter what diagnosis they may have.

PECS can help if the child:

- does not yet have functional communication
- does not initiate communication
- is not understood by a listener

***“PECS only teaches a child to request things”*: NOT true.**

Facts:

PECS starts with requesting, some children may move on to use PECS for skills, such as commenting, asking questions, expressing emotions and providing information on their day. PECS is not just about a person getting their needs met, it gives the user the ability to communicate socially as well.

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How to get started?



Speak to your child's Speech and Language Therapist, specialist teachers or your child's teacher who can support with implementing PECS.

Further information



You can visit Pyramid Education Website for further information regarding PECS. The link to the website is : [PECS® - Picture Exchange Communication System \(pecs-unitedkingdom.com\)](https://www.pecs-unitedkingdom.com).

The website has further information on Phases of PECS, Research evidence, Video resources on PECS. It also has details on formal PECS training offered by Pyramid Education.