

USING PECS AT HOME

Picture Exchange Communication System

PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)

- 6 phases
- Starts at a basic exchange for motivator and progresses to simple sentences and commenting
- To be successful child needs to be motivated to request favourite things e.g. food, toys, games
- Easiest to use items which have an end point
- Relevant to the child, i.e. things they might want to communicate not what you might say to them e.g. be quiet or what you want them to say e.g. toilet
- Remember to always label whatever your young person asks for, this helps them learn the language as well as the image

PECS — click on the phase your child is at to watch a short video

- Have a look at the paperwork from your child's class teacher, this should indicate what phase of PECS they are working at
- PECS involves exchanging symbols for items your young person wants, there are 6 phases, but the most important are:
 1. Basic exchange – I give a picture of my favourite thing to a communication partner and I get it, every time. Might need 2 people initially. [PECS - Phase 1 - YouTube](#)
 2. Distance and persistence – I take that picture to a person who can help e.g. parent and get their attention, I get what I want, every time. Might need 2 people initially. [PECS - Phase 2 - YouTube](#)
 3. Discriminating – I can choose between pictures, something I want and something I don't or between up to 5 things I like. I might like to look through my book to find what I want. I don't have to get what I want every time I ask for it, i.e. you can say 'no' [PECS Phase 3 - YouTube](#)
 4. Building a sentence – I can put 2 symbols on a sentence strip (I want + motivator) and give it to a communication partner [PECS Phase 4 - YouTube](#)

Getting started at home – points to consider

- Need motivators, things your child likes enough to want to ask for them
- Ideally items that have a natural end point e.g. bubbles/food
- How will PECS work best in your house:
 - Book in 1 location
 - PECS pages at relevant locations
 - On ribbons hanging from the rafters!
 - Photos or symbols
- Start small, pick a couple of activities/times of the day to focus on e.g. snacks/meals, choosing TV show, toys, music; asking to go outside (garden/park/walk)
- As you and your child get more confident ask for more symbols.

PECS at a mealtime

[PECS at home, asking for favourite dinner items - YouTube](#)



Home challenges

- I don't have a 2nd person to support – try to work at the level your student has already mastered, if they are just starting out with PECS focus on trying to find lots of things that they like to play with, eat, or do.
- The symbols/book go missing – if this is a constant issue it can sometimes be easier to use a communication board in the home environment as there are fewer small pieces of paper. If you can, just keep printing additional symbols for use.
- Time to complete exchanges – do what you can, where possible pick 1-2 activities/times during the day e.g. snack/meals where you know you can offer the opportunity for requests. Any additional opportunities you find are a bonus 😊
- I don't have the resources - We can send PECS books home but will need them to come back to school once restrictions are eased as this is their voice in school. Alternatively you can ask for a set of symbols to be sent home for you, if there are specific things your child likes at home make sure to let your teacher know.
- I have to say no – ideally students who are at an early stage of PECS (phases 1 and 2) should have every request honoured as they are learning the benefit to communicating rather than helping themselves or getting cross. If your child is at this stage then try to focus on a couple of activities in which you know you can say yes.

Help available

- If you need additional help or support to implement PECS at home please contact your class teacher or myself:
 - Shelley Soni (Speech and Language Therapist)
- Good luck 😊