

# Picture Exchange Communication System Fact Sheet

## Brief Description

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is used to teach learners to communicate in a social context. Using PECS, learners are initially taught to give a picture of a desired item to a communicative partner in exchange for the item. There are six phases of PECS instruction: (1) “how” to communicate, (2) distance and persistence, (3) picture discrimination, (4) sentence structure, (5) responsive requesting, and (6) commenting.

## Qualifying Evidence

PECS meets evidence-based criteria with 2 group design and 4 single case design studies.

## Ages

According to the evidence-based studies, this intervention has been effective for preschoolers (3-5 years) to middle school-age learners (12-14 years) with ASD.

## Outcomes

PECS can be used effectively to address social, communication, and joint attention skills.

## Research Studies Providing Evidence

- Ali, E., MacFarland, S. Z., & Umbreit, J. (2011). Effectiveness of combining tangible symbols with the Picture Exchange Communication System to teach requesting skills to children with multiple disabilities including visual impairment. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 46*(3), 425-435.
- Angermeier, K., Schlosser, R. W., Luiselli, J. K., Harrington, C., & Carter, B. (2008). Effects of iconicity on requesting with the Picture Exchange Communication System in children with autism spectrum disorder. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2*(3), 430-446. doi: 10.1016/j.rasd.2007.09.004
- Carr, D., & Felce, J. (2007). The effects of PECS teaching to Phase III on the communicative interactions between children with autism and their teachers. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 37*(4), 724-737. doi: 10.1007/s10803-006-0203-1
- Dogoe, M. S., Banda, D. R., & Lock, R. H. (2010). Acquisition and generalization of the Picture Exchange Communication System behaviors across settings, persons, and stimulus classes with three students with autism. *Education and Training in Autism and Development Disabilities, 45*(2), 216-229.
- Howlin, P., Gordon, R. K., Pasco, G., Wade, A., & Charman, T. (2007). The effectiveness of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) training for teachers of children with autism: A pragmatic, group randomised controlled trial. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 48*(5), 473-481. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01707.x

Jurgens, A., Anderson, A., & Moore, D. W. (2009). The effect of teaching PECS to a child with autism on verbal behaviour, play, and social functioning. *Behaviour Change*, 26(1), 66-81. doi: 10.1375/behc.26.1.66

**PICTURE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM FACT SHEET—SUGGESTED CITATION**

Wong, C. (2013). *Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) fact sheet*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Adapted from:

Collet-Klingenberg, L. (2008). *Overview of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, Waisman Center, The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders.