

SST NEWSLETTER

THE PICTURE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Answering the 5?s about PECS

At Specialized Speech Technologies, many of our clients are currently utilizing the PECS system for communication. The PECS program is one of the most successful programs for teaching communication to non-verbal children and adults; however the benefits of PECS extend to a wide variety of individuals affected by a communicative impairment. Listed below are answers to some of the questions you may have about the PECS program.

Who? PECS was originally designed to be used with individuals diagnosed with autism; however, many parents and therapists are now utilizing PECS to help those with a wide variety of communicative disorders. Examples include Apraxia of speech, Down Syndrome, and speech disorders resulting from stroke or brain trauma.

What? The PECS system trains individuals to initiate requests and make comments using a hierarchy of six different phases. It requires the use of small picture cards representing nouns, verbs, and various attributes. Pictures are chosen based on individual needs.

Where? PECS can be used anywhere!! The goal is to have individuals carry a portable library of their unique PECS cards that are available for use in any setting throughout the day (i.e. home, school, and community).



When? The PECS program has been successfully used with ages 18 mo.-90 years of age.

Although PECS can be incorporated into an individual's life at any time, research tells us that children who develop language before age 4 have a greater likelihood of future success with learning and reading.

Why? PECS has many benefits. Current research estimates that nearly 80% of those trained with PECS will develop some degree of verbal communication. PECS is favored by many over sign language, because it is universally understood by those in our community. It provides a relatively inexpensive, practical method for communication.

Want more information? Visit the official PECS website at www.pecs.com or ask one of the therapists at Specialized Speech Technologies, Inc. Note: The PECS program should only be used under supervision of an individual who has attended a formal PECS training. Workshops are held throughout the country several times each month. Discounted rates are available for parents, students and groups of three or more.

Source: Frost, L. & Bondy, (2002) The Picture Exchange Communication System Training Manual. Newark, DE: Pyramid Educational Products, Inc.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CORNER

The five senses are the avenues through which a child experiences the world. But perception is what transforms raw data into meaning, which in turn makes learning and retention possible. When stimulated, the senses automatically trigger a "detective" game within the brain. The brain then enables the child to recognize and identify what stimulated him and some form of learning takes place. Additional learning takes place when the child can discriminate between different inputs.

Three types of sensory perception:

1. Detection--the child senses a stimulation
2. Recognition--the child is able to recognize and identify what was detected
3. Discrimination--the child perceives a pattern or stimulation as being similar or different from other patterns and stimulations.



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NEW FACES

Specialized Speech Technologies would like to welcome Katie Szabo and Nicole Peltier to our therapy team! Katie is a certified Speech-Language Pathologist. She earned her BS from Capital University and her MS in SLP from Columbia University. She has previously worked in the school systems.

Nicole is also a certified Speech-Language Pathologist. She is a graduate of Miami University, graduating with her BS in 2002 and her MS in 2003. This is her first position as an SLP. Previous care experience includes positions as school-age co-director in a child care facility and an activities assistant in an adult day service.



DEPARTING FACES

We are sad to share that two of our speech-language pathologists, Shannon Greathouse and Jody Hamilton, are moving on from SST to further their careers within the school systems. They have certainly touched the lives of the many clients that they have worked with over the last 1 ½ years. We wish them best of luck in the future, and they will be greatly missed!

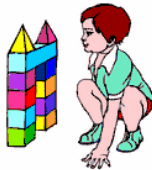
OT CORNER (cont.)

Visual Perception

One way to develop visual perception abilities is through eye-hand coordination exercises that involve manipulating various materials. Here are some good kinds of manipulative materials for you to provide your child:

-For color and size discrimination:
an assortment of colored blocks

-For shape discrimination:
you can make your own inexpensive set of shapes by cutting a circle, square, rectangle, triangle and oval, etc. out of construction paper



Tactile Perception

Some children may balk at getting their hands wet, working with clay, paste, sand or paint. These children have difficulty distinguishing between objects that are smooth or rough, shiny or dull, soft or hard, etc. These children have difficulty with tactile perception and need further enrichment to help them perceive textural awareness of various media. One should also consider whether the children's tactile defensiveness interferes with tactile perception.

Source: Perception Training
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0OIM/is_55/a_i_112021717

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Here are a few tips for a fantastic first day:

- Get enough [sleep](#).
- Eat a healthy [breakfast](#).
- Try your best.
- Develop good work habits, like writing down your assignments and turning in your [homework](#) on time.
- Take your time with school work. If you don't understand something, ask the teacher.
- Keep a sense of humor. In fact, one such teacher shows his new students a picture of himself graduating high school - a grinning ape in a red graduation cap and gown. This usually makes the kids laugh, and it's a good way to remind them that school is **fun!**

Source: Heather Waldman, BA, MA. Accessed at: http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/school_stuff/back_to_school.html



LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT SCHOOLS

Back-to-School Shopping: \$5.4 billion

The amount of money spent at family clothing stores in August 2002. Only October, November and December -- the holiday shopping season -- also sales showed last year greater than \$5 billion. Similarly, bookstore sales in August 2002 totaled \$1.8 billion, an amount not surpassed by any month except January and December. (The dollar volume estimates have not been adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday or trading day differences or price changes.)

6.5 million: The number of practicing teachers in the United States -- from prekindergarten to college.

92,012: Number of public elementary and secondary schools that children will report to on the first day of school this year. The corresponding number of private elementary and secondary schools is 27,223.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2003/cb03ff-11.html>