



Autism Focused Intervention
Resources & Modules

PECS

RESOURCE PACKET: PICTURE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM™

UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules
Sam, A., & AFIRM Team, Updated 2025



**The National Professional
Development Center** on Autism



**FRANK PORTER GRAHAM
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE**



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Please Note:

This supplemental module to Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) is not intended to take the place of training and resources on PECS™ provided by Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. Please visit the website: <http://www.pecsusa.com> for information on resources and training. The information presented in this supplemental module should be implemented under the supervision of a trained professional.



PICTURE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM™

WHAT IS PECS?

Picture Exchange Communication System™ is a type of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), which are interventions that use a system of communication that is not verbal/vocal, including aided and unaided communication systems.

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS™), originally developed by the Delaware Autistic Program,² can be used to help learners on the spectrum develop a system of communication and promote speech development and production.³ PECS™ is used to teach learners with limited functional communication skills to initiate communicative exchanges and interactions within a social context.

PECS has 6 phases:

1. Teaching the physically assisted exchange
2. Expanding spontaneity
3. Simultaneous discrimination of pictures
4. Building sentence structure
5. Responding to "What do you want?"
6. Commenting in response to a question



EVIDENCE-BASE:

Based upon the 2020 systematic review conducted by the National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice (NCAEP), Picture Exchange Communication System™ is a specific type of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) that meets the evidence-based practice criteria with 47 single case design studies. Augmentative and Alternative Communication has been effective for early intervention (0-2 years), preschoolers (3-5 years), elementary school learners (6-11 years), middle school learners (12-14 years), and high schoolers (15-18 years) on the spectrum. Studies included in the 2020 EBP report (Steinbrenner et al., 2020) detail AAC can be used to effectively address the following outcomes for a target goal/behavior/skill: academic/pre-academic, behavior, communication, joint attention, motor, play, and social.

For more information on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), please visit the AFIRM module.

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STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This step-by-step practice guide outlines how to plan for, use, and monitor Picture Exchange Communication System™.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

Each of the following points is important to address so that you can be sure Picture Exchange Communication System™ is likely to address the target goal/behavior/skill of your learner on the spectrum.



HAVE YOU FOUND OUT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT...?

- ☐ Identifying the behavior...?
- ☐ Collecting baseline data through direct observation...?
- ☐ Establishing a target goal or outcome that clearly states when the behavior will occur, what the target goal or outcome is, and how team members and/or observers will know when the skill is mastered...?

If the answer to any of the above questions is 'No,' review the process of how to select an appropriate EBP (<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/selecting-EBP>).

For more information about Picture Exchange Communication System™ and Augmentative & Alternative Communication, please visit <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/>.

Keep in mind that **Picture Exchange Communication System™** teaches the learner to use visual-graphic symbols to communicate with others.

STEP 1: PLANNING FOR PECS

The planning step details the initial steps and considerations involved to prepare for using Picture Exchange Communication System™ with a learner on the spectrum.

1. Receive PECS training from a certified PECS Training

This supplemental module to Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) is not intended to take the place of training and resources on PECS™ provided by Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. Please visit the website: <http://www.pecsusa.com> for information on resources and training. The information presented in this supplemental module should be implemented under the supervision of a trained professional.

2. Establish performance criteria for program goals

A minimum of two adults are needed to implement PECS. One adult is identified as the "helper" and the other adult as the "communicative partner".

3. Conduct a reinforcer sampling

Reinforcers are needed for using PECS. A reinforcer sampling can be used to identify reinforcers for individual learner.

 Use the **Reinforcer Sampling & Checklist** to determine reinforcers to use with PECS.

4. Conduct Assessments

Determine the learner's current communication skills. The information collected through assessments, will help team members determine target skills for PECS training (for example, requesting, initiating interactions) and types of prompts that can be used to facilitate communicative exchanges.

5. Prepare communication pictures/symbols and books

No specific pictures or symbols are required for PECS. Select the pictures/symbols that are the easiest to create and use. A designated communication book is needed to store all commonly used pictures/symbols. Plan for creating at least two copies of the communication book for use when the learner begins using PECS across settings and with different communicative partners.

STEP 2: USING PECS

This step details the process of implementing Picture Exchange Communication System™ with a learner on the spectrum.

1. Implement Phase 1: Teaching the physically assisted exchange

The goal of Phase 1 is for the learner on the spectrum to look at, reach for, pick up, and hand the picture/symbol to the communicative partner. To accomplish this goal, address the following:

- Arrange the training environment by creating opportunities for learning should be available in both a structured and unstructured environment. In a structured training environment, the learner on the spectrum should be across from the communicative partner, with a helper seated behind or beside the learner to assist in developing the desired actions. To help learners generalize the use of newly acquired skills across settings, activities, and people, PECS training can occur in unstructured environments such as during center time, recess, or lunch.
- Helper physically prompts the learner's communicative exchange with communicative partner. During this stage, no verbal prompts are used with the learner to increase the learner's independence and reduce the learner's reliance upon others during communicative exchanges.
- Reward learner with reinforcer (desired item) once the learner gives the picture/symbol to the communicative partner AND the communicative partner labels the item.
- Gradually reduce the amount of assistance so that few or no prompts are needed for the learner to initiate and complete an exchange by using backward chaining. As the learner becomes more independent during communicative exchanges and less physical assistance from the helper is required, the communicative partner can begin to fade the open-hand prompt.

- The learner meets basic skills of Phase 1 and is ready to move to Phase 2 when the learner is:
 - Reaching for the high-interest item
 - Picking up the picture/symbol of the item,
 - Handing the picture/symbol to the communicative partner
 - Acquiring high interest item

2. Implement Phase 2: Expanding spontaneity

The goal of Phase 2 is for the learner on the spectrum to increase spontaneity and generalization of the picture exchange. To accomplish this goal, address the following:

- Increase the number and variety of reinforcer items to prevent satiation.
- The learner on the spectrum should exchange pictures/symbols with more communicative partners selected from individuals with whom the learner interacts on a regular basis.
- To increase generalization of the communicative exchange, instruction should occur in a variety of natural environments such as home, school, and community.
- The learner should seek out the communication book in order to request items from a partner. To expand the spontaneity of communicative exchanges, use the following two traveling activities: 1) increase the distance to the communicative partner and 2) increase the distance from the communication book.
- The learner meets skills of Phase 2 and is ready to move to Phase 3 when the learner is:
 - Traveling to communicative partner (distance).
 - Traveling to communication book (distance).

3. Implement Phase 3: Simultaneous discrimination of pictures

The goal of Phase 3 is for the learner to attend to the pictures/symbols in order to discriminate between them. To accomplish this goal, address the following:

- When beginning Phase 3, the communication book will only include two pictures/symbols. One picture should be a known, highly reinforcing item or an item appropriate for the situation. The second picture is a non-preferred or unrelated item. It is very important to reinforce the learner's selection of the correct picture as soon as it happens.
- If learners do not learn this skill as quickly, they will need specific instruction. For these learners, use the 4-step error correction procedure.
- Once the learner can discriminate between two pictures/symbols, additional pictures/symbols are introduced to allow for the learner to request from multiple picture/symbol options.
- Use correspondence checks to ensure that the learner is requesting and taking the item for which he or she is asking.
- The learner meets skills of Phase 3 and is ready to move to Phase 4 when the learner is:
 - Independently discriminating between 12 to 20 pictures/symbols
 - Accurately discriminating between 3 or pictures/symbols presented as options
 - Independently traveling to and from communication book to initiate exchange.

4. Implement Phase 4: Building sentence structure

The goal of Phase 4 is for the learner to spontaneously make requests using simple sentence structure. To accomplish this goal, address the following:

- Introduce the sentence strip to the learner by placing the “I want” symbol on the left side of sentence strip, Communicative partner guides learner to place the selected picture/symbol next to “I want” symbol on sentence strip. After the learner removes the sentence strip (with assistance if needed) and hands it to the communicative partner, the communicative partner reads the sentence pointing to each symbol/picture. Use backward chaining to fade assistance.
- After the communicative partner reads, “I want,” and before naming the requested item, the communicative partner should pause to promote verbalization.
- The learner meets skills of Phase 4 and is ready to move to Phase 5 when the learner is:
 - Placing the “I want” symbol on the strip
 - Placing picture/symbol on strip
 - Exchanging the strip with communicative partner
 - Pointing to pictures/symbols.

5. Implement Phase 5: Responding to “What do you want?”

The goal of Phase 5 is for the learner to increase initiations and for the learner to answer the question, “What do you want?” To accomplish this goal, address the following:

- To begin teaching the learner to respond to the question, “What do you want?” use a 0-second delay. Simultaneously point to the “I want” card and ask the learner “What do you want.”
- As the learner demonstrates ability to complete the sentence strip and the exchange, increase the interval of the delay. The communicative partner should encourage the learner to complete the exchange prior to the point prompt.
- The learner meets skills of Phase 5 and is ready to move to Phase 6 when the learner is:
 - Responding and requesting without prompts
 - Beating the prompt for the delay interval used.

6. Implement Phase 6: Commenting in response to a question

The goal of Phase 6 is for the learner to use labeling and naming. To accomplish this goal, address the following:

- Add a new symbol to represent the concept of “I see” to the communication book.
- Introduce commenting in response to the question, “What do you see?” by holding up a selected item and asking the question. The communicative partner physically assists learner in picking up “I see” symbol and placing it on the sentence strip. The communicative partner waits 5 seconds, If learner places the picture/symbol on sentence strip and gives it to communicative partner, provide praise and a reinforcer (not item being held by communicative partner. If the learner does not, the communicative partner should provide physical assistance. Gradually add pictures/symbols and items for the learner to discriminate among.
- Two teach differentiated responses, add the question “What do you want?” Then add other questions such as “What do you hear?” or “What do you have?”
- To encourage a learner to comment without being questioned first, create interesting environmental events and fade questions.



- The learner has acquired the needed skills for Phase 6 when the learner is:
 - Making spontaneous requests
 - Making spontaneous comments.

STEP 3: MONITORING PECS

The following step details how to monitor the use of Picture Exchange Communication System™ with a learner on the spectrum and how to determine next steps based on the data.

1. Collect and analyze data

By collecting data on target behaviors and skills, team members are able to determine if the learner is making progress. To purchase these resources, visit the Pyramid Educational Consultants™ website at <http://www.pecsusa.com>.

2. Determine next steps based on learner progress

Collecting data will help team members decide about the effectiveness of using Picture Exchange Communication System™ and whether the learner on the spectrum is making progress. If a learner is making progress based upon data collected, team members should continue to use the selected strategies.

If team members determine that the learner is not making progress, consider the following:

- Do the preferred items need to be changed?
- Do additional preferred items need to be added?
- Are selected reinforcing items motivating to the learner?
- Is the correct level of prompting or physical assistance being used?
- Does the learner need to address skills acquired in a previous Phase?
- Is PECS being used with fidelity? (Use the PECS Implementation Checklist to determine fidelity.)
- Has a team member been trained to use PECS? (See Pyramid Educational Consultants™ website for training opportunities at <http://www.pecsusa.com>.)

If these issues have been addressed and the learner on the spectrum continues not to show progress, consider selecting a different evidence-based practice to use with the learner on the spectrum.



IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU START, HAVE YOU...?

- ☐ Identifying the target goal/behavior/skill...?
- ☐ Collecting baseline data through direct observation...?
- ☐ Establishing a target goal or outcome that clearly states when the behavior will occur, what the target goal or outcome is, and how team members and/or observers will know when the skill is mastered...?

If the answer to any of the above questions is 'No,' review the process of how to select an appropriate EBP (<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/selecting-EBP>).

Observation:	1	2	3	4	5
Date:					
Observer's Initials:					

STEP 1: PLANNING

1.1	Receive PECS training from a certified PECS trainer					
1.2	Identify adults who will participate in PECS and train as needed					
1.3	Conduct a reinforcer sampling					
1.4	Conduct assessments					
1.5	Prepare communication pictures/symbols and books					

STEP 2: USING

2.1	Teaching the physically assisted exchange					
2.2	Expanding spontaneity					
2.3	Simultaneous discrimination of pictures					
2.4	Building sentence structure					
2.5	Responding to "What do you want?"					
2.6	Commenting in response to a question					

STEP 3: MONITORING

3.1	Collect and analyze data					
3.2	Determine next steps based on learner progress					



REINFORCER SAMPLING & CHECKLIST

Learner's Name: _____ Date/Time: _____

Observer(s): _____

Interfering Behavior: _____

Directions: Use this worksheet and checklist to identify and select reinforcers/rewards based on the learner's preferred items, interests, and activities for **Positive Reinforcement** and **Token Economy**.

CONDUCT A REINFORCER SAMPLING:

1. Sit in front of the learner and hold up two items. Ask the learner to "Pick one."
2. Wait 10 seconds for the learner to indicate selection in manner that is appropriate for the learner (e.g., verbalization, pointing, using an augmentative communication device).
3. Place the selected object in a container for learner's selection and non-selected item in the not selected container.
4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 until half of the objects presented are selected.

Item 1	Selected?	Item 2	Selected?
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No
	Yes No		Yes No

LIST SELECTED REINFORCERS:



LIST POTENTIAL REINFORCERS:

	AGE APPROPRIATE?
1. What natural reinforcers could be used?	Yes No
2. What activities, objects, and/or foods does the learner select independently?	Yes No
3. What phrases or gestures seem to produce a pleasant response from the learner?	Yes No
4. What does the learner say they would like to work for (if appropriate)?	Yes No
5. What reinforcers were identified by parents/family members and/or team members as being successful in the past?	Yes No
6. Does the learner require additional adaptations/modifications/supports? Such as visual supports or a communication device?	Yes No
7. Have reinforcers/rewards for the learner been identified based on the learner's interests/preferred items and/or activities?	Yes No
8. Are additional materials and/or resources for using Functional Behavior Assessment ready and available?	Yes No



FOODS FOR SNACKS/MEALTIME ROUTINES:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Cheese | ☐ Fruit | ☐ Pretzels |
| ☐ Chicken Nuggets | ☐ Goldfish | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Chips | ☐ Ice Cream | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ French Fries | ☐ Pizza | ☐ Other: |

GAMES FOR PLAY/RECESS ROUTINES:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ☐ Burrito games with a blanket | ☐ Peek-a-Boo | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Chase | ☐ Tickle | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Pat-a-Cake | ☐ Other: | ☐ Other: |

TOYS FOR PLAY/RECESS ROUTINES:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Books | ☐ Legos | ☐ Remote controlled toys |
| ☐ Cars/Trains/Trucks | ☐ Noisy toys | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Computer | ☐ Phones | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Doll house | ☐ Puzzles | ☐ Other: |

SPECIAL INTERESTS FOR ACTIVITIES/ROUTINES:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Book Character: | ☐ Movie Character: | ☐ TV Show: |
| ☐ Book: | ☐ Movie: | ☐ Video Game: |
| ☐ Cars, Trains, Trucks | ☐ Music | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Computers/Technology | ☐ Numbers | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Dinosaurs | ☐ Real-Life Person: | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ Letters | ☐ TV Show Character: | ☐ Other: |



PHASE GUIDE & CHECKLIST

Learner's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____

Observer(s): _____

Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____

Directions: The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is used to teach learners with limited functional communication skills to initiate communicative exchanges and interactions within a social context in six phases.

PHASE 1: TEACHING THE PHYSICALLY ASSISTED EXCHANGE:

- ☐ The learner reaches toward desired item as identified by reinforcer sampling. Helper interrupts reach and redirects the learner to pick up the picture/symbol.
- ☐ Once the learner has the picture/symbol in hand, the helper assists the learner by placing the picture in the open hand of the communicative partner.
- ☐ Communicative partner immediately hands the item to the learner and names the item.
- ☐ No verbal prompts are given through the learning process in Phase 1.
- ☐ Once the exchange steps are established with the learner, physical assistance from the helper is faded.
- ☐ After physical assistance from the helper is faded during the exchange, the communicative partner fades use of open-hand prompt.

PHASE 2: EXPANDING SPONTANEITY:

- ☐ The learner picks up picture/symbol without prompting. As training progresses, the learner must move some distance to access picture/symbol from the communication book.
- ☐ When the learner has a picture/symbol in hand, the learner moves some distance to give it to communicative partner.
- ☐ Communicative partner hands the item to the learner and names the item.
- ☐ No verbal prompts are given throughout phase 2.
- ☐ The exchange is immediately rewarded with the requested item being given to the learner.



PHASE 3: SIMULTANEOUS DISCRIMINATION OF PICTURES:

- ☐ Communicative partner provides two pictures/symbol (one preferred and one non-preferred). The learner must move to and pick up the preferred picture/symbol.
- ☐ Communicative partner interacts with both items to entice learner.
- ☐ The learner must pick up picture/symbol and move some distance to the communicative partner.
- ☐ As soon as the learner touches correct picture, communicative partner provides social reinforcement.
- ☐ Upon receiving the picture/symbol, communicative partner immediately hands the item to the learner and names the item.
- ☐ Provide a variety of distracter items and target pictures/symbols.
- ☐ Do not provide verbal prompts.
- ☐ Move pictures around on communication book (e.g., diagonal, vertical, horizontal).
- ☐ Use discrimination correction procedure when appropriate.

PHASE 4: BUILDING SENTENCE STRUCTURE:

- ☐ Communicative partner places “I want” symbol on the left side of sentence strip.
- ☐ Learner takes picture/symbol from communication board and the communicative partner guides learner to place the picture/symbol next to “I want” on the sentence strip.
- ☐ Communicative partner guides the learner to take sentence strip and hand it to the communicative partner.
- ☐ Communicative partner points to pictures/symbols as the partner reads the sentence strip and gives the requested item to the learner.
- ☐ Communicative partner prompts learner to replace sentence strip in the communication book.
- ☐ On repeated trials, fade physical guidance until learner is able to place the picture/symbol next to “I want”.
- ☐ After the exchange, the communicative partner guides the learner to place the “I want” symbol on the sentence strip before placing the picture/symbol of the requested item.
- ☐ On repeated trials, fade physical guidance for placing the “I want” symbol.



- ☐ The learner points to the symbols/pictures as the communicative partner reads the sentence strip. To promote verbalization, the communicative partner pauses after saying, "I want" and before identifying the picture/item providing an opportunity for the learner to say the name of the requested item.
- ☐ If learner verbalizes at all during the pause, the communicative partner provides the requested item immediately and provides verbal praise for vocalization.

PHASE 5: RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS, SUCH AS "WHAT DO YOU WANT?":

- ☐ Simultaneously, the communicative partner points to the "I want" card and asks, "What do you want?"
- ☐ The communicative partner adds an increasing delay between the point and the verbal cue, "What do you want?"
- ☐ Communicative partner fades the point prompt as learner demonstrates ability to beat the verbal prompt.
- ☐ Communicative partner provides many opportunities for the learner to answer the question, "What do you want?" and opportunities for the learner to initiate requests without prompting.

PHASE 6: COMMENDINT IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION:

- ☐ Prepare materials (items learner can request, pictures/symbols of the items, and new picture/symbol for "I see").
- ☐ Place the "I see" symbol and picture/symbol of item near sentence strip
- ☐ Communicative partner holds an item and asks, "What do you see?", then points at the "I see" symbol.
- ☐ Communicative partner guides learner to pick up the "I see" symbol and place it on the sentence strip, if learner does not do so independently.
- ☐ Communicative partner waits 5 seconds to see if learner picks up and places picture of item on the sentence strip.
- ☐ If learner successfully places picture of item on sentence strip, communicative partner says, "Yes, you see a ____."
- ☐ If learner does not successfully place picture of item on sentence strip, communicative partner guides learner to do so and says, "You see a ____."
- ☐ Communicative partner provides verbal praise or other tangible reinforcement but does not provide learner with corresponding item.



- ☐ Communicative partner fades cues as learner is able to use the “I see” symbol to respond to “What do you see?”
- ☐ Increase number of pictures and items the learner has to discriminate among to answer the question, “What do you see?”
- ☐ As the learner is able to reliably respond to “What do you see?”, place the “I see” symbol below the “I want” symbol in the upper-left corner of the communication book.
- ☐ Communicative partner intermixes “What do you see?” with “What do you want?”
- ☐ Communicative partner provides requested item when learner requests appropriately.
- ☐ Communicative partner responds with a verbal praise or alternative reinforcement, upon learner correctly labeling or commenting.
- ☐ Promote spontaneous commenting by fading questioning.



DATA COLLECTION

Learner's Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____

Observer(s): _____

Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____

Directions: By collecting data on target behaviors and skills, team members are able to determine if the learner is making progress. Data collection needed for each Phase of PECS is described in the table below.

PHASE	COLLECT DATA ON:
Phase 1: Teaching the physically assisted exchange	- Record skills used during the communicative exchange (i.e., picking up, reaching, releasing) - Record types of prompts needed to complete communicative exchange (e.g., full physical, partial)
Phase 2: Expanding spontaneity	- Record if the learner traveled to communicative partner - Record distance learner traveled to communicative partner - Record if the learner traveled to communication book - Record distance learner traveled to communication book - Record items requested (at least four different items)
Phase 3: Simultaneous discrimination of pictures	- Record number of pictures the learner can independently discriminate (between 12 to 20) - Record number of pictures the learner can accurately discriminate among (between 3 to 4) - Record distance learner traveled to communication book
Phase 4: Building sentence structure	- Record if learner places "I want" on sentence strip - Record if learner places picture/symbol on sentence strip - Record exchanges of sentence strip with communicative partner - Record if learner points to pictures/symbols
Phase 5: Responding to "What do you want?"	- Record delay interval used - Record if learner answers question - Record if learner beat prompt
Phase 6: Commenting in response to a question	- Record delay interval used - Record if learner answers question - Record if learner beat prompt

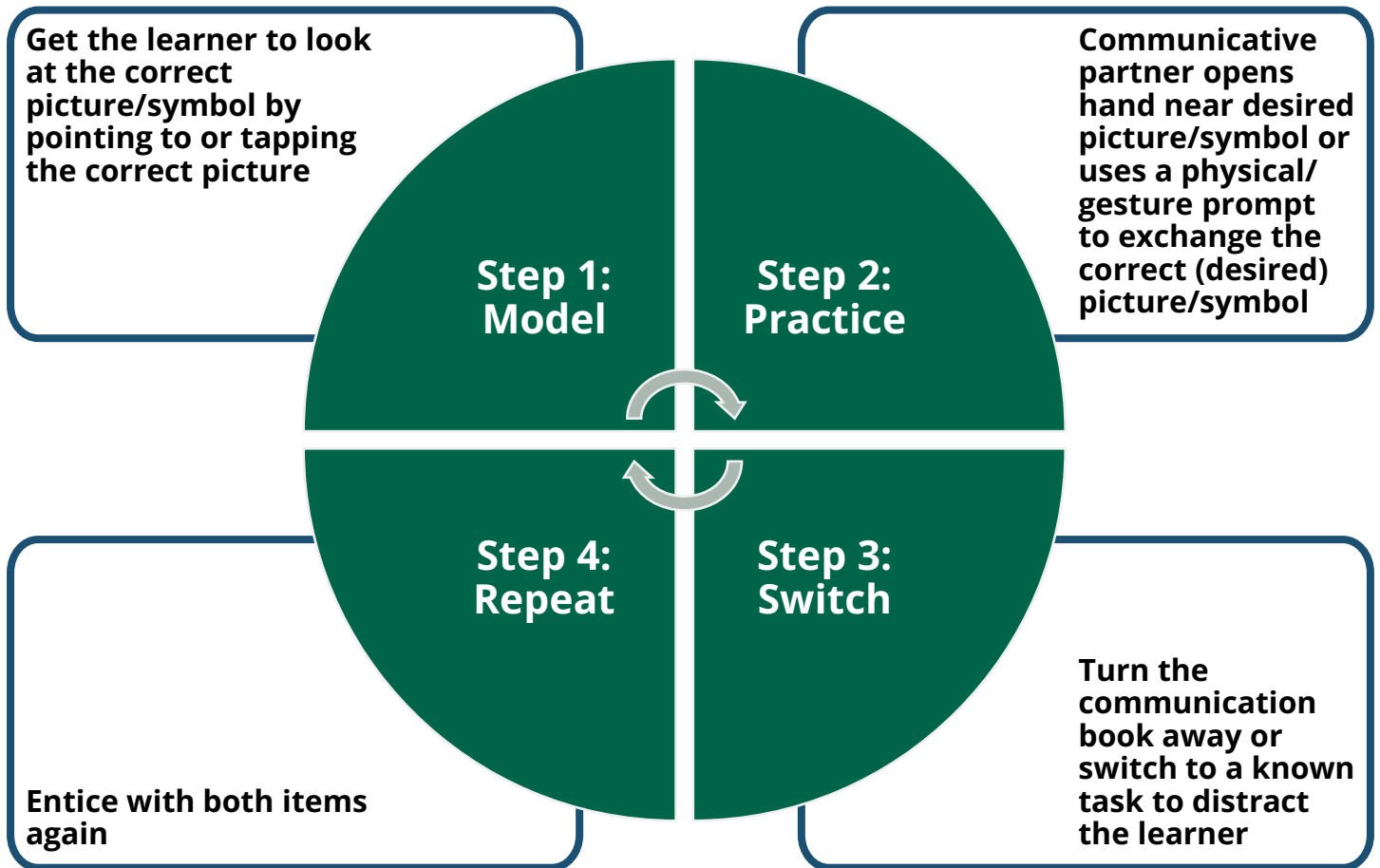
4-STEP ERROR CORRECTION

Learner's Name: _____ Date/Time: _____

Observer(s): _____

Target Skill/Goal/Behavior: _____

Directions: Other learners do not learn this skill as quickly and will need specific instruction. For these learners, use the 4-step error correction procedure.



To increase the contrast between the picture/symbol being taught and other pictures/symbols consider the following strategies:

- Enlarge picture/symbol of the relevant object to be larger than the picture/symbol of the non-preferred picture/symbol
- Use color picture/symbol of relevant objects to contrast black-and-white pictures of non-preferred/irrelevant object
- Highlight the picture/symbol of relevant object with a magic marker
- Use a blank card as the other picture in the display
- Make the picture/symbol of the relevant object 3-dimensional by attaching it to a block
- Place the picture/symbol of relevant object closer to where you are holding the desired object.



GLOSSARY

4-step error correction procedure - used in PECS instruction to teach discrimination which includes: 1) model, 2) practice, 3) switch, and 4) repeat.

Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) - Interventions using and/or teaching the use of a system of communication that is not verbal/vocal which can be aided (e.g., device, communication book) or unaided (e.g., sign language)

Backward chaining - is a procedure used with task analysis where the final step in a chain is taught first and as a step is mastered, the previous step is taught

Baseline data - data collected on current performance level prior to implementation of intervention

Communication book - Small three-ring binder with Velcro strips laced on the cover and inside the book used for PECS. Communication book should be as functional as possible with pictures organized inside by categories or activities

Correspondence check - used in PECS instruction to ensure that the learner is requesting and taking the item for which he or she is asking.

Generalization - when the target skill or behavior continues to occur when the intervention ends, in multiple settings, and with multiple individuals (e.g., peers, teachers, parents)

Gestural prompt - a gesture/movement provides the learner information about how to use a target skill or complete a task.

Individualized Intervention - an intervention that is planned and implemented in a way specific to the learner receiving the intervention

Material reinforcers - Motivating to learners, but team members should vary these reinforcers with others to learners do not grow tired of them.

Modeling (MD) - Demonstration of a desired target behavior that results in use of the behavior by the learner and that leads to the acquisition of the target behavior.

Natural reinforcer - occur naturally because of using the target behavior or skill.

Physical prompts - useful when teaching motor behaviors and when the learner does not respond to less restrictive prompts.

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) - behaviorally based intervention that teaches the learner to use visual-graphic symbols to communicate with others.

Prompt - any help provided that will assist the learner in using specific skills. Prompts can be verbal, gestural, or physical.



Reinforcement (R) - The application of a consequence following a learner's use of a response or skills that increases the likelihood that the learner will use the response/skills in the future.

Reinforcer sampling - helps to identify activities and materials that are motivating to learner. Also known as a preference assessment.

Response interval - the amount of time the learner must respond.

Satiation - occurs when a selected reinforcer is no longer motivating to a learner.

Social reinforcer - found in any setting but might need to be taught to learners if these reinforcers are not inherently reinforcing. Examples include facial expressions, words and phrases ("Good job!").

Tangible reinforcers - objects that a learner can acquire.

Target behavior - the behavior or skill that is the focus of the intervention. Behavior may need to be increased or decreased.

Team members - includes the parents, other primary caregivers, IEP/IFSP team members, teachers, therapists, early intervention providers, and other professionals involved in providing services for the learner on the spectrum.

Verbal prompts - includes any verbal assistance provided to learners to help them use a target skill correctly. Verbal cues range in intensity level from least to most restrictive.



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