

# PECS CHEAT SHEET

## **Phase 1: The physical exchange**

Determine the preferred items and activities of the child (possibly food or drink initially). Prepare pictures of these items (computer generated pictures or symbols, photographs, line drawings). When a new phase of the system is being taught two adults work with the child. One adult is the communicative partner (CP) and the other is the silent, physical prompt (PP).

Place the desired object (e.g. popcorn) in view. Place the picture between the child and the popcorn. As the child reaches for the popcorn, the adult (PP) helps them to pick up the picture and release it into the open hand of the other adult (CP), who has the popcorn. As soon as the child releases the picture into the adult's hand, the adult says 'popcorn' and immediately gives the child popcorn. It is important that the adult does not ask 'What do you want?' or prompt the child to pick up the card until the child has initiated the communication. To aid generalisation, the two adults switch roles and use different settings and pictures. Physical prompting is gradually reduced. Eventually the child will independently hand the picture of the popcorn to the adult in exchange for popcorn.

## **Phase 2: Increasing spontaneity and range**

The distance between the child and the adult is increased. Pictures are moved further away from the child and eventually into a communication book. The child at this phase learns to go to their communication book, pull the picture out, go to the adult and release the picture into the adult's hand.

## **Phase 3: Picture discrimination**

The child is taught to discriminate between two and then more pictures. The child will then request an item by going to the communication book, selecting the appropriate picture from an array, going to the adult and giving them the picture.

## **Phase 4: Sentence structure**

The child is taught to build simple sentences on a strip using the 'I want' picture followed by the picture of the item being requested. The whole sentence is handed to the adult.

## **Phase 5: Responding to 'What do YOU want?'**

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The child is taught to respond to the question 'What do you want' by completing the sentence strip. Up to this phase the child initiated the communication.

## **Phase 6: Responsive and spontaneous commenting**

The child is taught to respond appropriately by labelling or commenting to questions such as 'What do you want?' 'What do you see?' 'What do you have?' and other questions at random.