Moving on from PECS

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Picture Exchange Communication System

- PECS - was devised to help children with little or no intention to communicate to have a voice.
- This is usually children with ASD but can be useful for other children too.
- Individual's **<u>EXPRESSIVE</u>** communication.
- Need to develop **spontaneous, functional communication in all environments**.
- Applied Behavioural Analysis – ABA approach which is taught through repetition.
- Andy Bondy and Lori Frost developed it in the USA and it works really well.

PECS – how

- PECS initially requires 2 people to help the student understand the different phases.
- Communication Partner (CP): who has the motivational item. Be enticing with the item and **do not say** "what do you want?". We are trying to develop spontaneous communication.
- Physical Prompter (PP) – **non-speaking partner** who physically supports the student to do exchanges, move to the CP, help with discrimination activities and only helps when necessary.
- 2 people are only needed to teach the child to move on to the next level and one person can generally manage in the stages for lots of practice.

PECS – Structure of phases

- Phase 1:- Physical Exchange: single exchange of a symbol for a motivational reward.
- Phase 2:- Distance and Persistence: student travels to PECS book and travels to the CP.
- Phase 3:- Discrimination: Distinguish that different pictures are related to different items.
- Phase 4:-"I want…" sentences.
- Phase 5:- Responding to questions: "what do you want?"
- Phase 6:- Commenting: "I see...", "I hear…" "I feel…", "I don't like…" sentences.

Problems with Implementation

- Adults living and working with the YP need to be trained to train the YP to use it.
- In schools there are limited time periods that staff encourage it – even in special schools.
- The most important bit – **distance and persistence doesn't get practiced** and so the system is not spontaneous or functional.
- Very limited communicative functions.

PECS needs practice

- Motivation for the adults can be lacking
- Motivation for the YP can be lacking
- Transition to new places without the PECS folder or training on how to use it is a challenge.
- Adults often want too replace the PECS folder with an iPad.
- This is more motivating for the adult as it is seen as more normal .

Colourful Semantics

- I like to introduce Colourful Semantics or Adapted Shapecoding to develop communicating functions which can work well and PECS folders can be colour coded with different pages.
- Introduce in work stations as independent work at a level below that which the YP is working at.
- Resources from Integrated Treatment Services provide books that are ready to go but making things specific to the YP works better.

Moving on to high tech

- YP must always continue to have their PECS folder and it has to be up to date.
- They **have** to have develop spontaneous communication and understand **intent** to communicate.
- They need to develop a wider range of communication functions
- YP need to be able to resist the charms of the Apps on the iPad – or we need to limit their access.

Which App to use

- Many parents like Proloquo2go which is what I am most familiar with.
- Clicker Communicate can work well.
- Speak for yourself
- Any other success stories?
- Discussion