Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder with persistent difficulties in social communication and social interactions. Individuals with ASD have unique needs due to their core challenges in social interaction and verbal and nonverbal communication.

At Acorns with the support of a Speech and Language Therapist we aim and focus on:

- ensuring the child has a functional communication system that is individualized according to their distinctive abilities
- initiating spontaneous communication in functional activities and engaging in reciprocal communication interactions
- measuring progress using systematic methods to determine whether the child is making progress with their communication skills.

PECS uses behavioural principles and embeds a natural approach to teach how to communicate. Particularly, children with autism will not initiate or may find difficult use spontaneously communication. Also, they may find it difficult to sequence words within a sentence owing to neural development disorders; children learn to create a sentence using pictures (e.g. “I want biscuit”).



PECS can be considered unique and suitable for the predicted intervention as communication is child-initiated rather than prompt dependent and aims to enable the child to be more independent in his/her daily life.

Please contact your class teacher or your child Speech and Language Therapist if you would like to use PECS at home.

Ideas for PECS at home

- Snack time: cut up snacks so that your child has lots of opportunities to ask for more
- Drink time: pour a small amount into your child’s cup and wait for him to ask for more
- Bubbles: blow bubbles for your child then stop, wait and see if he can use PECS to ask for more
- Balloons: blow up a balloon, let it go and let it whizz around the room. See if your child can use PECS to ask for another turn
- Bricks: hold the bricks in a container and see if your child can use PECS to ask for one
- Car runs/ ball runs: keep hold of the car or ball and see if your child can use PECS to ask for another turn
- Songs: sing a song with your child then encourage him to use PECS to ask for you to sing it again
- Colouring: if your child enjoys colouring, offer him another coloured pen and then indicate that he must use PECS to request it.