ECHO AUTISM COMMUNITIES

Early Intervention

1

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Project ECHO

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

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2

ECHO Autism: Early Intervention Continuing Education

- **Target audience:** Pediatricians, family practitioners, nurse practitioners, therapists, psychologists, community mental health professionals.
- **Objective:** To improve the knowledge of primary care providers and other providers who care for children with autism and other behavioral health concerns.
- *The Office of Continuing Education, School of Medicine, University of Missouri is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.*
- *The Office of Continuing Education, School of Medicine, University of Missouri designates this live educational activity for a maximum of **1.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™**. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.*

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3

ECHO Autism: Early Intervention Speaker Disclosure

Current ACCME (Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education) rules state that participants in CME activities should be made aware of any relevant affiliation or financial interest in the previous 12 months that may affect the planning of an educational activity or a speaker's presentation(s). Each planning committee member and speaker has been requested to complete a conflict of interest statement for the ***ECHO Autism: Early Intervention Series.***

Planning Committee Member and Speaker Disclosures:

- **Kristin Sohl, MD,FAAP has the following relationships:**
  - **Cognoa – research funding**
  - **Quadrant Biosciences – advisory board**
  - **Autism Navigator – consultant**
- **No other speaker or planning committee member has a relevant financial interest**

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4

Learning Objectives

- The learner will identify criteria for introducing PECS to improve initiation of communication.
- The learner will identify and know how to transition through all of the phases of PECS.
- The learner will understand how to increase generalization across environments PECS.

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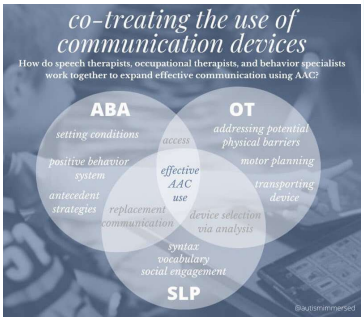
5

Collaboration = Success

ABA, OT, SLP



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6

What is PECS?

- Developed by Andrew Bondy, PhD & Lori Frost, MS, CCC-SLP
- Based on B.F. Skinner's book, Verbal Behavior, and broad spectrum applied behavior analysis
- Evidence-based practice
- Verbal prompts are not used
- 6 phases beginning with single picture of desired item advancing to teaching individuals how to use modifiers, answer questions, and comment
- Primary goal = teach functional communication

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7

PECS Training

- Highly encourage training through Pyramid Educational Consultants www.pecsusa.com/online-training

Trainings include:

- PECS Overview
- PECS Level 1 Training
- PECS Level 2 Training
- Transitioning from PECS to SGDs
- Guide to Managing Challenging Behaviors
- Teacher Critical Communication Skills

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8

Core Vocabulary

- PECS and Core Vocabulary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckYliMcmeMc
- Think about Content words vs. Grammatical Function Words
- Remember Functional Communication

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9

Suitable Candidates for PECS

- Not limited by age
- Intentional communicator
- Have personal preferences (sample for preferences)
- Primarily used for those who are nonverbal
- Highly unintelligible speech
- Minimally effective communicators with their present communication system
- Primarily echolalic
- Careful consideration of the program and its strengths and weaknesses should play an important role in program selection for each prospective communication learner.

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10

PECS Phases

- PECS Phase 1: **How to Communicate** = The child learns to exchange single pictures for items or activities they really want; two person prompt
- PECS Phase 2: **Distance and Persistence** = Still using single pictures, the child learns to generalize this new skill by using it in different places, with different people, and across distances.
- PECS Phase 3: **Picture Discrimination** = The child learns to select from two or more pictures to ask for their favorite things. These are placed in a communication book.

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11

PECS Phases

- PECS Phase 4: **Sentence Structure** = The child learns to construct simple sentences on a detachable sentence strip using an "I want" picture followed by a picture of the item being requested.
- PECS Phase 5: **Answering Questions** = The child learns to use PECS to answer the questions, "What do you want?"
- PECS Phase 6: **Commenting** = The child is taught to comment in response to questions such as, "What do you see?", "What do you hear?", and "What it it?" They learn to make up sentences with "I see ___." "I hear ___.", "I feel ___."

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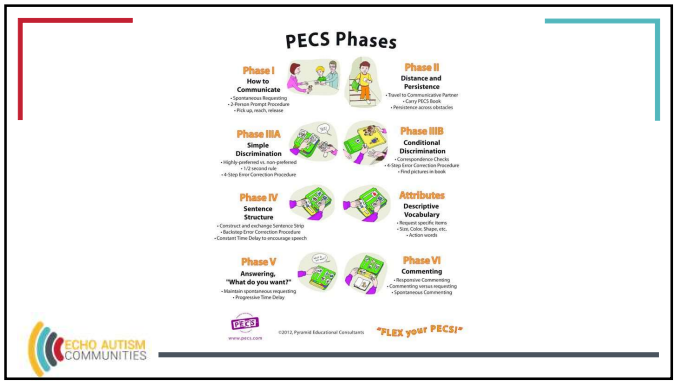
12



13

Transitioning from PECS to SGD

- Vocabulary has increased to the point where communication books are bulky/unmanageable
- Choose device that is lightweight, portable, and user friendly
- Consider client's receptive language skills
- Consider the client's social connectedness (interest in communication with others)

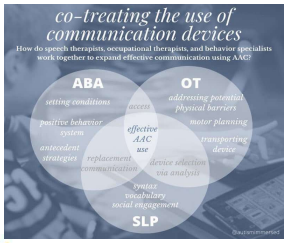
14

Transitioning from PECS to SGD

- Start by teaching the client to request, moving systematically through social routines, personal questions, informing, reporting, etc.
- Incorporate multiple trainings and check-ins for ALL adults who communicate with client on a daily basis (i.e., teachers, parents, siblings, etc.)
- Encourage use of SGD across ALL environments (not just for therapy sessions)
- Get consult from BCBA for setting conditions, positive behavior systems, etc.
- Get consult from OT for how to position device, mount to wheelchair, etc.
- Provide modeling and time for client to explore device

15

Team approach is essential for success!



- Teacher
- Pediatrician
- Parent
- SLP
- OT
- ABA
- Etc….

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16

Resources/References

- www.asha.org
- www.pecsusa.com

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17

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School of Medicine
University of Missouri Health

18