

Welcome

2011 is set to be yet another busy year for Pyramid Educational Consultants UK. With over 60 workshops taking place throughout the UK & Ireland alongside in-house training and consultancy visits to various settings nationwide, 2011 will certainly keep us on our toes. Read on for further information on what we are up to this year.

Best wishes from everyone at Pyramid Educational Consultants UK.



High Tech Vs Low Tech Vs No Tech

PECS or High-tech Device?

In recent years technology has become more and more sophisticated, including that used in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Today there are a variety of small, sturdy devices available, with voice output as an option on some. These choices often create confusion when deciding the best option for individuals who require AAC for functional communication.



Although the goal of PECS is simply to provide an effective communication system, many people who use PECS eventually transition to using speech as their primary mode of communication. If an individual progresses through all the PECS phases and acquires a large picture vocabulary, which is used spontaneously and throughout the day, it may be time to consider introducing an electronic device.

PECS isn't tied to a particular set of symbols or any specific electronic device. PECS is a protocol for teaching the use of symbols for communication focusing on approaching another person, getting their attention, and delivering a message. With no voice output, the PECS user must learn the vital skill of social approach. PECS builds skills systematically and has a distinct advantage in that there are no pre-requisite skills on the part of the user to begin its use.

If in time the decision is made to introduce a high-tech device, consider what is being taught and how it will be taught. Using the Pyramid Approach to Education and the PECS protocol is recommended to ensure spontaneous communication continues with the new device.

Pyramid Educational Consultants does not endorse any specific AAC device. Edited article by Julia Biere, Clinical Director, Pyramid UK. Full article can be found at www.pecs.com



National Institute for
Health and Clinical Excellence

Pyramid Educational Consultants: NICE Stakeholders

We are pleased that Pyramid UK has been accepted by the NHS National Institute for Clinical Excellence as a stakeholder in their guidelines on Autism in children, adolescents and adults. We hope that this will lead to better communication outcomes for anyone with communication

difficulties. NICE works with experts from the NHS, local authorities and others in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors - as well as patients and carers. They make independent decisions, based on the best available evidence, including input from experts and interested parties.

We are proud to be able to contribute to these guidelines.

I've completed my PECS Basic Training, what's next?

This year we are holding three **PECS Advanced Training** workshops in London, Manchester & Birmingham. This 2 day advanced workshop is ideal if you have been implementing PECS in your setting and wish to learn the skills to produce solutions to any difficult PECS implementation issues.

You will:

- Review the phases of PECS and practice your skills
- Analyse common difficulties with PECS implementation
- Analyse a classroom day and introduce communicative opportunities to all activities
- Implement specific training strategies for teaching linguistic concepts & grammar

7 & 8 April - London - Ramada London Ealing

19 & 20 May - Manchester - Novotel Manchester Centre

29 & 30 Sept - Birmingham - Menzies Strathallen

Visit www.pecs.com to book your place

New 2011 workshop leaflet now available

Over 60 training workshops throughout the UK and Ireland.

Visit www.pecs.com or call us on 01273 609555 for your nearest workshop or to request a brochure.



Resources Update

We are constantly striving to provide the best resources and value for money for our customers. All PECS communication books are now self assembly. The PECS books, which come with two insert pages and a sentence strip, now come with simple instructions and hook & loop fasteners which you can attach yourself. By becoming self assembly we have reduced the cost of our PECS books and passed the saving on to you.

Large Communication book: £16.80 Small Communication book: £14.22

If you are ordering more than 10 books we do offer a chargeable assembly service, see our website for details and browse all the resources available at www.pecs.com Further insert pages are now available in self assembly tabbed sets. Each set contains 6 durable tabbed insert pages for easy turning in an assortment of colours.

New: Large Tabbed Insert Pages £21.60 New: Small Tabbed Insert Pages £21.60

Single Insert Pages are no longer available for individual purchase.



Reflections on working for Pyramid UK - 10 years on

We are very fortunate to have such dedicated members of staff working behind the scenes and on the road for us. This year Zena Barton, Pyramid Consultant, Jo Freeland, Resources Assistant and Linda Breden, Accounts Manager, will have each worked at Pyramid for 10 years. We spoke to them and asked what were their reflections on the last decade.

Jo Freeland, "I first learnt about PECS through Zena when she was a portage worker for my daughter Lily who has ASD. I was offered a part time job in 2001 and am still here! Not only is it a nice place to work, I feel proud to be working for a company that provides such a worthwhile service to schools & families, and from personal experience, I know PECS works."

Zena Barton, "It was back in 1986 when I first heard Sue Baker (Founder of Pyramid UK) give a talk about the first child in England that used PECS, from that moment I was hooked. I was lucky enough to be offered a job with Pyramid, and since then have travelled far and wide bringing PECS to all sorts of locations from India to Ireland. My biggest achievement has been the development of the PECS Intensive Programme, it focuses on not just developing the child's skills, but also working with the parents to ensure that they have all the skills needed to work with and help their own child. The most important thing for me is that I still get to work directly with children and families which is my favourite part of the job."

Linda Breden, "Pyramid has really grown as a company since I started back in 2001. Before joining Pyramid all my accounting experience had been with firms of solicitors, so it was a lovely change to join a small friendly team who's only goal was to improve the lives of people with communication difficulties."

Congratulations to you all, we are so pleased to have you on board, bring on the next ten years!



PECS visits Northern Ireland



Pyramid Consultants Gary Dadd and Louise Malkin travelled to County Armagh to carry out in- house PECS Advanced Training for Middletown Centre for Autism. The Centre is there to support the promotion of excellence in the development and co-ordination of education services to children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Gary and Louise enjoyed a busy two days with some very enthusiastic delegates. Here is some of the delegate feedback that was passed onto us by Frances O'Neill ASD Advisor at the centre "Excellent course, great refresher of basic skills and great new ideas for cross curricular activities",

"Excellent course, very well delivered and a vast amount of learning went on, lots of things to put in place when we return to school, well done Louise & Gary." For further information on in- house training and consultancy support please contact Christy Wallis, Operations Manager at cwallis@pecs.com

Pictured: Delegates at Middletown Centre for Autism practising their PECS skills with Louise Malkin

Be in our Newsletter

Our newsletter reaches thousands of people, we would love to hear from you. Please send in your PECS stories, or photos you would like to share in future newsletters.

Email Katie Spendiff, kspendiff@pecs.com or post them to the address at the top of the page.

