Kent Community Health
NHS Foundation Trust

A guide for patients about the

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Phase two – distance and persistence

We can now move on to help a child to use their new communication skills in different places, and with different people. This will mean they will have to learn to travel to their 'partner' or to find their communication board. They will also need to learn how to attract people's attention if the other person is not looking at them.

What we want to see

In phase two we can help a child learn to:

- Go to their communication board.
- Pull off a picture of something they want.
- Go and find their partner.
- Get the partner's attention.
- Release the picture into their partner's hand.

We can now begin to store the pictures in a communication book as the child's learns new words and their vocabulary builds up.

Why do this activity?

Your child will learn to become more independent by finding new partners to make their needs known and to keep trying if their initial attempts are not noticed.

What do we do?

- To start with two people are needed, the partner and the prompter.
- It is best to start by sitting at a table or on the floor and then gradually to move away from the child, or to move their communication board gradually further away.
- Have our board ready with the picture on and the matching object or activity.
- Try to vary the pictures.

How do we do it?

The partner starts by sitting opposite the child like in phase one with the picture on a communication board in front of the child so the child can pull the picture off the board and hand it to the partner.

The partner starts with their hand open and as the child exchanges the picture for the object they gradually move their hand back so the child has to reach further to exchange the picture, even to encourage the child to stand up to reach their partner. Also the partner can place their hand in sight but not open to encourage the child to find a way of letting the partner know they want something. The partner can also turn away so they are not looking at the child and encourage the child to come and look at them or tap them to attract their attention.

If the child stops or hesitates before reaching the partner, the prompter can guide the child to complete the task.

The partner gradually increases the amount of space between them until the child can cross the room to give them the picture.

When the child can go five to eight feet to reach their partner, then begin to increase the distance between the board and the child. Start off by having the board directly in front of the child, then gradually move it further away to encourage the child to walk to the board.

Now try when the child comes to you to turn away and see if they can get your attention, sometimes they will need the prompter to help them to come up to you and to tap you or say a word.

Begin to keep the communication book with all the pictures in, in one particular place so the child can be encouraged to find it when they want to communicate.

Monitoring progress

A record sheet is to be kept (copy attached) to record progress showing the number of attempts, if the child is prompted, to show the distance travelled to the partner and to the communication book.

The sheet can be used in home and/or nursery to make sure we are all working at the same level.

When to move on

We are ready to move on when the child can:

- Make an exchange on their own by getting the board, taking off the picture and then to travel to the partner up to 10 feet away, attract their attention and hand the picture over on nine out of 10 times.
- Using five different activities.
- With three different partners.

Contact the Children's Therapies Service

Please contact your Integrated Therapy Team if you have any queries or concerns regarding the information in this leaflet.

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley
Phone 01322 428242

Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks
Phone 01892 501860

Maidstone and Malling
Phone 01622 742333

Canterbury
Phone 01227 783042

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Customer Care Team

If you have a query about our health services, or would like to comment, compliment or complain about Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, you can contact the **Customer Care Team.**

Phone: 0300 123 1807, 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
Please say if you would like the team to call you back
Text: 07899 903499 **Email:** kcht.cct@nhs.net

Address: Customer Care Team, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, Unit J, Concept Court, Shearway Business Park, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4RJ **Web:** www.kentcht.nhs.uk

If you need communication support, an interpreter or this information in another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read or large print, please ask a member of staff.

You will be asked for your agreement to treatment and, if necessary, your permission to share your personal information.

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