

# PECS™ Intensive Program

*Thornlands, Brisbane  
January 23rd to 27th, 2012*

Pyramid Educational Consultants of Australia P/L  
are members of the "Helping Children with Autism"  
(FaHCSIA) provider panel



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## PECS™ Intensive Program

This 30-hour program is ideal for families seeking intensive communication intervention using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and the Pyramid approach to teaching. The emphasis will be on teaching the children to communicate within functional routines, while assisting parents/carers to continue this teaching at home following completion of the program. There is an expectation for parents/carers to have attended PECS Basic Training prior to the start of the program. The program includes an initial evaluation, through detailed history



information and videotape, completed by families approximately two months before the clinic-based sessions. In this evaluation, each child's current communication repertoire will be determined so that specific needs can be addressed. This will be followed by five days of intensive work within the clinic. Each day your child will work intensively for six hours, from 9.00am to 3.00pm.

Following completion of the program, a one-hour follow up session with a certified PECS Implementer will be available on a weekly basis for ten weeks. This session may occur at the Pyramid clinic, your home, or may be completed by telephone or web cam. The 10 hours follow up consists of both consultation and travel costs where travel is required.

## Potential Communication Objectives

### Individual Skills:

Skills that may be targeted for a child at the program include:

- requesting desired items and activities
- answering “yes” or “no” to the question, “Do you want this?”
- asking for assistance (i.e. “help”)
- requesting a “break” from a difficult or boring activity
- responding appropriately to a direction to “wait”
- responding to, and initiating, greetings
- using descriptive concepts in requests and comments
- following functional directions (both visual and verbal)
- following a picture schedule
- requesting items needed to complete a task
- commenting on items and events in the environment

### Group Skills:

In addition to individual communication objectives, the children will learn group skills, including:

- engaging in assigned tasks with peers in close proximity
- following group directions (both visual and verbal)
- sitting with peers
- waiting in a group
- eating meals with peers

### The Child:

This program is appropriate for children between the ages of three (3) and seven (7) years who have:

- not developed functional communication and have not been exposed to PECS
- been exposed to PECS but are having difficulty learning to discriminate between pictures
- complex communication needs

We are offering the program to a small number of children (four), with a high staff to child ratio, in order to maximise the childrens’ progress.

For each child, we will focus on consolidating existing, and teaching new, critical communication skills, both receptive and expressive. PECS will be used throughout the daily clinic-based program, for all five days.



### The Instructional Method:

All programming will utilise the principles of broad-spectrum applied behaviour analysis and will include:

- The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- distributed discrete trial instruction
- sequential task instruction
- incidental communication training
- functional routine training

### **Sophie Kerr, BAppSci. (Disability Studies) (Honours) BEd**

Sophie Kerr has worked in the field of disability in various capacities for the past 10 years with both children and adults with disabilities ranging from cerebral palsy to traumatic brain injury. Sophie's major focus over this time has been working with children on the autism spectrum aged between 2 and 14 years within Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) programs both in Australia and the UK. She has worked on an eclectic range of programs which have incorporated various interventions including picture communication, social skills development, speech and language development, motor skill development and sensory integration.



Following her secondary education at Numurkah Secondary College in Victoria, she completed a Bachelor of Applied Science (Disability Studies) at Deakin University in Melbourne and went on to complete her honours in 1999. She returned to study in 2005 and graduated with a Bachelor of Education from Charles Darwin University in Darwin.

Sophie's work within ABA programs has focused on teaching children social, play and academic skills as well as reading children for integration into mainstream school settings. She has been extensively involved in the training of new staff members and has been supervising ABA programs for 5 years.

In August 2002, Sophie relocated to London, United Kingdom, and commenced employment as the Program Supervisor for the Behavioural Intervention Group. In this position, Sophie worked within team settings utilising the principles of ABA to develop individualised educational programs for students.

In 2005, Sophie relocated to Darwin, Australia, where she was employed directly by parents to supervise and act as a consultant on their pre-existing ABA programs, developing and implementing behaviour intervention plans and educational programs for individuals who have a diagnosis of autism.

Prior to beginning work as a Pyramid Consultant Sophie attended various Pyramid workshops including: Teaching 9 Critical Communication Skills and PECS Review Practice and Problem Solving workshops in Darwin, presented by Rachel van der Linden, The Pyramid Approach to Behavior Intervention and Using Verbal Behavior to Analyze Language in Melbourne, presented by Andy Bondy. She commenced working for Pyramid Educational Consultants of Australia in February 2008. She has implemented PECS in her clinical work with numerous individuals with autism and related disabilities.

## **One Parents' Perspective...**

### **Pre-Intensive:**

'My daughter has little speech, I knew it (the intensive program) would be life changing for Briella, who is constantly frustrated at being unable to communicate and let her needs be known!'

### **During the Intensive:**

'Briella was still using her PECS book back at the motel for things that she couldn't "say" often the sweets picture'  
(The feedback provided was) 'Brilliant – everyday a record of what Briella had learnt/ worked on and what I could do to continue to work on overnight.'

### **Post Intensive:**

'..even though she still has a bit to go before mastering PECS, she already has realised the power of bringing me a picture and getting the reinforcer.'  
'..am excited to be heading home to show Briella's teachers and friends how far she has come along.'

## **Our Volunteers' Perspective...**

### **Amanda, Sydney...**

"... Rebecca and Sophie were friendly, very knowledgeable and dedicated facilitators. Volunteering at the Intensive meant I got to see the children progress really quickly throughout the week, which made me feel like all the effort we put in was truly worthwhile. It also meant I could see the power of PECS working right in front of my eyes and I found that very satisfying. I also just had a lot of fun playing and singing with a gorgeous, diverse group of kids. ("Fuzzy the Clown" is a song which will be forever etched in my mind). A big thanks to Pyramid for teaching me new skills, giving me more experience and great memories."

### **Miranda, Hong Kong...**

"... it is a busy but very encouraging & valuable experience to witness the wonderful improvement made by the little learners in just 5 days. The 2 consultants' passionate and professional ways in guiding us and handling data had set good examples for our future implementation of PECS in our school"

## PECS™ Intensive Program Package

### The Cost:

The cost of the program includes:

- 30 hours of intensive communication intervention
- a standard PECS communication book
- a range of pictures relevant to the individual child's needs
- ten hours of follow up (may consist of consultation & travel costs)
- a comprehensive summary report that will be received within one month of the conclusion of the program

Attendance at the program and the follow up sessions incurs a total cost of \$AUD3500.00.

A \$AUD500.00 deposit must be paid at the time of application. The deposit will be refunded if your child is not accepted into the program.

**FaHCSIA funding may be used for this intervention program.**

### Venue:

The PECS Intensive Program will be held at:

*Redland District Special School  
Panorama Drive  
Thornlands QLD 4164*



### Dates:

January 23rd to 27th, 2012 inclusive.

## Sign up for PECS™ Intensive Program

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's names: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be using your FaHCSIA funding for this program? YES NO

### Method of Payment

(\$AUD500 deposit must be included with this application)

- Cheque
- Invoice (EFT payment)
- Visa
- MasterCard

Credit card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount (\$AUD): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make cheques out to Pyramid Educational Consultants of Australia Pty Ltd*