Help Card

A unique, distinctive icon for those using visual communication strategies

help

Requesting Help

When something isn't functioning the way typically developing young children like, they quickly learn to get an adult's assistance. If an item is small but doesn't work, they may take it to an adult; if it is large, they may bring the adult to the problem itself. These actions are learned even before the child has learned to say, "Help!"

Students with communication deficits must learn to approach others in order to initiate communicative interactions for a variety of outcomes, including seeking assistance. This social approach is taught within the Picture Exchange Communication System® (PECS®) training protocol. Once students are independently approaching others (with a picture or the actual problematic object), they can learn to approach others to make a specific request for help.

PYRAMID EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS

Usage Guide

Use the 2-person Prompting Procedure described in The Picture Exchange Communication System Training Manual, 2nd Edition (Frost & Bondy, 2002) to teach the following:

Step 1: Exchanging the "help" icon

The Communicative Partner creates a problem for the student and the Physical Prompter prompts the student to exchange the "help" icon. The prompts are faded until the student independently exchanges the "help" icon when he needs assistance.

Step 2: Using the "help" icon on a Sentence Strip

Once the student has mastered the exchange of the "help" icon and PECS Phase IV, teach him to incorporate the "help" icon into sentences.

Step 3: Expanding the help request

Teach the student to specify what type of help he needs by adding more pictures to the Sentence Strip.

Make sure you teach the student to request assistance for a range of different problems, in varied environments, and with different communicative partners.

For more detailed information on teaching "help," refer to pages 245 to 247 of The PECS Training Manual, 2nd Edition (Frost & Bondy, 2002), which is given to every PECS L1 workshop delegate.