



## **The Picture Exchange Communication System & The Pyramid Approach to Education**

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Training ⌘ Seminars ⌘ Consultation ⌘ Certification

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*The source for services designed to enhance the lives of children and adults with  
autism and related developmental disabilities*

*Andrew S. Bondy, Ph.D. & Lori Frost, M.S., CCC/SLP*

## **Service Directory 2008**

## Who Is Pyramid?

**Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc.** was established in 1992 by Andrew Bondy, Ph.D., and Lori Frost, MS, CCC/SLP. They, and the entire staff of Pyramid, offer consultative services in home settings as well as public and private schools that combine the broad spectrum of applied behavior analysis and a unique approach to functional communication. Pyramid is well known for providing highly successful training programs and staff development within many public school settings. Pyramid consultants include speech/ language pathologists, psychologists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts and special education teachers. Pyramid is the source for The Picture Exchange Communication System- PECS- the dynamic alternative/augmentative system that focuses on initiation of communication rather than teacher controlled responses. The PECS Training Manual, written by Ms. Frost and Dr. Bondy, has helped thousands implement this widely acclaimed system.

Pyramid is the source for the Pyramid Approach to Education- a step-by-step approach to developing environments that blend motivational systems with functional activities and creative communication strategies. The Pyramid Approach is the basis for staff and family training. It is used by many public and private schools around the world. Pyramid is the source for workshops on PECS and the Pyramid Approach to Education. Workshops may be designed to introduce PECS or the Pyramid Approach to professionals and/or family members. *Pyramid* is the source for staff development, program design or family training. Pyramid offers a wide range of services provided by a number of talented professionals who are highly trained in the fields of psychology, applied behavior analysis, special education, and speech/ language pathology.

## The Pyramid Mission

The mission of Pyramid Educational Consultants is to provide exceptional behavior analytic and communication consultation and training to support educators, professionals, families, and caretakers in teaching and caring for individuals with learning difficulties. Functional and practical interventions using the full spectrum of applied behavior analysis are used to teach individuals how to communicate, function independently, and be successful in their schools, homes, places of employment, and the community.

## The Pyramid Group of Companies

Pyramid Educational Consultants Inc. USA	<a href="http://www.pecs.com">www.pecs.com</a>
Pyramid Educational Consultants UK Ltd	<a href="http://www.pecs.org.uk">www.pecs.org.uk</a>
Pyramid Educational Consultants Australia	<a href="http://www.pecsaustralia.com">www.pecsaustralia.com</a>
Pyramid Educational Consultants of Canada, Inc.	<a href="http://www.pecs-canada.com">www.pecs-canada.com</a>
Pyramid Educational Consultants France	<a href="http://www.pecs-france.fr">www.pecs-france.fr</a>
Pyramid Educational Consultants of Greece	<a href="http://www.pecs-greece.com">www.pecs-greece.com</a>
Pyramid Educational Consultants of Japan	<a href="http://www.pecs-japan.com">www.pecs-japan.com</a>

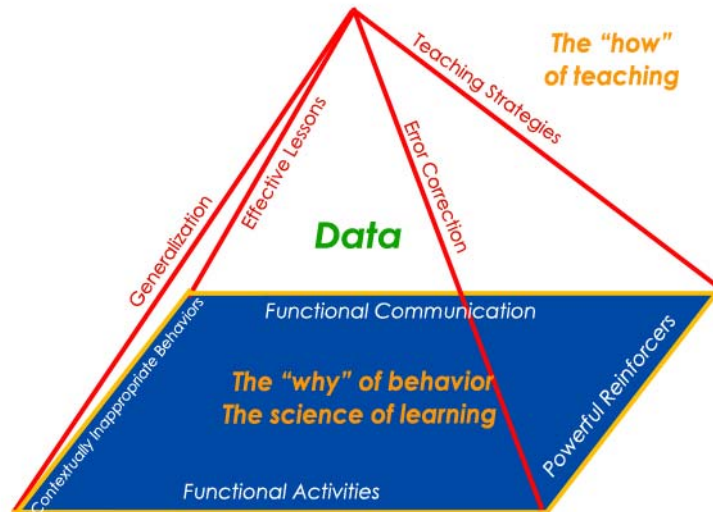
## Pyramid Approach to Education

The Pyramid Approach to Education is a unique teaching method that establishes effective learning environments for children and adults with autism or related developmental disabilities and severe learning impairments. Created by Dr. Andrew Bondy, this system offers sound principles for those who teach, whether in a classroom or at home.

The Pyramid Approach is based on two different types of learning elements: structural and instructional. Through the use of applied behavior analysis, this method provides the foundation for a positive environment for growth. Structural elements focus on functional activities and communication, powerful reinforcers, and behavior intervention plans. These elements form the base of the Pyramid Approach, creating the necessary positive setting that will foster learning. Instructional elements include lesson formats, prompt strategies, error correction strategies (uniquely developed and suited to specific prompting strategies), and generalization. All elements involve data-based decision making. When all of the elements of the educational pyramid are combined, this system results in success in a broad array of settings.

Dr. Bondy developed this system of teaching after years of working with children and adults with autism and related developmental disabilities. It is a very systematic program that allows educators to individualize each child's learning environment to reach maximum benefits. It is one of the few approaches that encourage creativity and innovation on the teacher's part, and utilizes a broad spectrum of behavior analysis principles. The Pyramid offers a unique blend of applied behavior analysis and an emphasis upon the development of functional communication skills, regardless of communication modality. The Pyramid emphasizes how to teach, rather than simply what to teach.

### The Pyramid Approach to Education



## Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)



The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) was developed in 1985 as a unique augmentative/ alternative training package that teaches children and adults with autism and other communication deficits to initiate communication. First used at the Delaware Autistic Program, PECS has received worldwide recognition for focusing on the initiation component of communication. PECS does not require complex or expensive materials. It was created with educators, resident care providers and families in mind, and so it is readily used in a variety of settings.

PECS begins with teaching a student to exchange a picture of a desired item with a “teacher”, who immediately honors the request. The training protocol is based on B.F. Skinner’s book, *Verbal Behavior* so that functional verbal operants are systematically taught using prompting and reinforcement strategies that will lead to independent communication. Verbal prompts are not used, thus building immediate initiation and avoiding prompt dependency. The system goes on to teach discrimination of symbols and then how to put them all together in simple sentences. In the most advanced Phases, individuals are taught to comment and answer direct questions. Many preschoolers using PECS also begin developing speech.

The system has been successful with adolescents and adults who have a wide array of communicative, cognitive and physical difficulties. The foundation for the system is the PECS Training Manual, 2nd Edition, written by Lori Frost, MS, CCC/SLP and Andrew Bondy, PhD. The manual provides all of the necessary information to implement PECS effectively. It guides readers through the six phases of training and provides examples, helpful hints and templates for data and progress reporting. This training manual is recognized by professionals in the fields of communication and behavior analysis as an effective and practical guide to one of the most innovative systems available.

PECS is especially successful if appropriately combined with elements of behavior analysis. The manual offers many suggestions on assessing reinforcers, teaching strategies, fading prompts and other issues. The authors encourage PECS users to create an environment that enhances and encourages communication through the use of the Pyramid Approach to Education. The manual briefly outlines the Pyramid and how it can be established in various settings.

### PECS at a glance

<b>Phase I</b>	Teaches students to initiate communication right from the start by exchanging a single picture for a highly desired item.
<b>Phase II</b>	Teaches students to be persistent communicators- to actively seek out their pictures and to travel to someone to make a request.
<b>Phase III</b>	Teaches students to discriminate pictures and to select the picture that represents the item they want.
<b>Phase IV</b>	Teaches students to use sentence structure to make a request in the form of “I want _____.”
<b>Phase V</b>	Teaches students to respond to the question “What do you want?”
<b>Phase VI</b>	Teaches students to comment about things in their environment both spontaneously and in response to a question.
<b>Expanding Vocabulary</b>	Teaches students to use attributes such as colors, shapes and sizes within their requests.

## Services Series

Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. offers an extensive series of services within the field of autism, related developmental disabilities, and communication systems. Below is a brief description of each series and service offered by Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. Feel free to click on the links provided for a more in-depth summary and access for workshop registration information.

### [The PECS Series](#)

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) series consists of trainings and consultation specifically related to the understanding and use of PECS. These include an overview, basic and advanced training workshops, and consultation options. This series also incorporates PECS certification at both the Implementer and Supervisory levels.

### [The Language and Communication for Everyone Series](#)

The Language and Communication for Everyone Series addresses broad issues pertaining to language development. Workshops focus on the analysis of basic functional units of language, how to teach critical functional communication skills as well as how to promote speech and/or other specific communication modalities (e.g. PECS, signing, voice output device, etc.)

### [The Excellence in Teaching Series](#)

The Excellence in Teaching Series includes a variety of workshops and consultation services designed to assist teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals, and family members with the opportunity to optimize learning and performance of students who face developmental challenges. These include how to implement the Pyramid Approach to Education model within schools, communities, and within home. The Pyramid Approach provides a framework that focuses on meeting students' individual learning needs by combining a unique blend of broad spectrum applied behavior analytic, evidence-based strategies, with a special emphasis on methods for promoting functional communication, academic, and social skills.

### [Short-Talk Series](#)

The PECS Short-Talk series involves presentations that last from 1 hour to 1 day. A variety of topics address many current issues in autism and developmental disabilities. These topics include the language of emotions, how speech and language pathologists can learn about the principles and strategies behind Applied Behavior Analysis, myths and misconceptions about PECS, how administrators can best provide services, expanding picture discrimination strategies and how to transition PECS users to other communication modalities.

## Delivery Methods

### Public Trainings:

Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. offers a series of scheduled workshops worldwide. To find a Pyramid or PECS Training near you, visit our website at [www.pecs.com](http://www.pecs.com) or call us at 888-732-7462.

### On-site Trainings & Consultation:

Training Workshops and Consultation Services can be conducted onsite and are ideal for organizations and families who:

- have 20 or more people to train
- want to have a systematic training/consultation program implemented across the year
- want to avoid costly travel expenses and time associated with off-site trainings
- would like to design specific training dates and hours
- need focus on specific or unique issues
- are looking for key note speakers with knowledge and expertise in an array of topics

### Video Conferencing and Distance Learning

Both Training Workshops and Consultation Services are available via Video Conferencing. The video conference is a live connection between our skilled consultants/trainers and your location. Both parties are able to see, hear, and present materials, just as if they were in the same room.

PECS and Pyramid Approach Distance Learning is available for individuals or groups who are interested in receiving consultation on PECS and the Pyramid Approach via video, web, and telephone.

## Training & Seminars Summary

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### The PECS Series:

1. PECS Overview
2. PECS Basic Training
3. PECS Advanced Training
4. PECS Review, Practice, and Problem Solving (PECS Advanced Training: Day 1)
5. Incorporating PECS Across the Day (PECS Advanced Training: Day 2)

### Language and Communication Series:

1. Teaching Communication Skills for Independence
2. Analyzing and Fine Tuning Communication

### Excellence in Teaching Series:

1. Pyramid Approach Overview: Creating Effective Teaching Environments
2. Pyramid Approach: Creating Effective Teaching Environments
3. Pyramid Approach: Creating Effective Teaching Environments + Basic PECS Training
4. Guide to Managing Challenging Behaviors
5. Teacher's Guide to Organizing and Managing the Classroom
6. What is Autism: Critical Features and Effective Strategies
7. Asperger Syndrome: Critical Features and Effective Strategies
8. Parent Training: An Adjustment in Perspective
9. Beyond Survival Skills: A workshop for Teaching Assistants

### Short Talk Series

Short-Talks range from 60 minutes to a full day

1. PECS Overview
2. Pyramid Approach Overview: Creating Effective Teaching Environments
3. PECS and Behavior Management
4. Transitioning Children from PECS
5. Alternative Discrimination Strategies for PECS
6. PECS Myths and Facts
7. My Child has Autism...Now What?
8. The Language of Emotions
9. Administrative Issues and Autism: Coming Soon to a School Near You!

## Consultation Services Summary ---

### The PECS Series:

1. PECS Start-Up™
2. PECS Check-Up™
3. PECS Telephone Consultation
4. PECS Distance Supervision
5. PECS Two-Week Intensive Program

### Excellence in Teaching Series:

1. Pyramid Approach Program Evaluation
2. Pyramid Approach Classroom Consultation
3. Pyramid Approach In-Home Consultation

## Certification Summary ---

### The PECS Series:

1. PECS Implementer Certification
2. PECS Group Implementer Certification Skills Demonstration Day
3. PECS Supervisor Certification

### Excellence in Teaching Series:

1. Pyramid Powered Certified Classrooms

## **Training & Seminars**

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Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. offers a wide range of training workshops based on the client's and student's needs and requirements. On this page you will find a brief summary of all our available training workshops.

### **THE PECS SERIES:**

#### **1. PECS Overview**

This overview is appropriate for all members of the educational team who would like to learn about the Picture Exchange Communication System including a summary of all six phases.

#### **2. PECS Basic Training**

This intense two-day training is designed to teach participants the theory behind The Picture Exchange Communication System and the protocols on how to appropriately implement the six phases of PECS.

#### **3. PECS Advanced Training**

*(Prerequisite: PECS Basic Training)*

This workshop is perfect for anyone who has attended the PECS Basic Training and who have been implementing PECS. On Day 1 review the PECS training protocol and troubleshoot current implementation challenges. On Day 2, we address advanced PECS lessons and programming for PECS across the day.

#### **4. PECS Review, Practice, and Problem Solving (PECS Advanced Training: Day 1)**

*(Prerequisite: PECS Basic Training)*

This workshop provides a thorough review of how to implement PECS, including reviewing the most common implementation problems as well as discrimination difficulties and strategies. Participants will have opportunities to practice their PECS skills under the guidance of a Pyramid consultant and troubleshoot any implementation problems they may be having.

#### **5. Incorporating PECS Across the Day (PECS Advanced Training: Day 2)**

*(Prerequisite: PECS Basic Training)*

This workshop consists of strategies for incorporating PECS within functional contexts across the day with expectations for the student to use language beyond single picture requests. Advanced PECS lessons are also explored.

## **Training & Seminars**

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### **LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SERIES FOR EVERYONE SERIES:**

#### **1. Teaching Communication Skills for Independence**

This training discusses how to teach critical communication skills that lead to greater independence in the home, work, school and community settings to students who are using any communication modality.

#### **2. Analyzing and Fine Tuning Communication**

This training will introduce attendees to B.F. Skinner's analysis of language (Verbal Behavior) and its acquisition, independent of modality. This presentation will highlight key functional language units as well as describe complex cases seen in many language lessons. Issues related to emotions and other hard-to-learn language concepts for children with autism will also be addressed.

### **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING SERIES:**

#### **1. Pyramid Approach Overview: Creating Effective Teaching Environments**

This is an overview of how to set up an effective teaching environment for students with autism or related developmental disabilities using the Pyramid Approach to Education.

#### **2. Pyramid Approach: Creating Effective Teaching Environments**

This workshop is appropriate for teams who are creating special education instructional programs or for existing teams looking for comprehensive training and application opportunities. The Pyramid Approach to Education is a broad-spectrum behavior analytic approach to teaching. The training covers functional activities, reinforcement systems, communication/ social skills, contextually inappropriate behaviors and alternatives, generalization, creating effective lessons, specific teaching strategies, minimizing and correcting errors, and data collection and analysis.

#### **3. Pyramid Approach: Creating Effective Teaching Environments + Basic PECS Training**

This workshop includes the complete PECS Basic Training as well as the elements within the 3-Day package and is appropriate for teams who are creating special education instructional programs or for existing teams looking for comprehensive training and application opportunities.

#### **4. Guide to Managing Challenging Behaviors**

This training involves applications of the Pyramid Approach to Education to the management of challenging behaviors. Discussions focus on analyzing and addressing a student's skill deficits prior to or while simultaneously addressing contextually inappropriate behaviors.

#### **5. Teacher's Guide to Organizing and Managing the Classroom**

This dynamic presentation provides educators with many practical examples for setting up and running an effective classroom for students with autism and other developmental disabilities.

#### **6. What is Autism: Critical Features and Effective Strategies**

This training focuses on how to design effective educational environments for students with autism along with other severe disabilities using the Pyramid Approach to Education.

## **Training & Seminars**

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### **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING SERIES Cont.:**

#### **7. Asperger Syndrome: Critical Features and Effective Strategies**

The educational issues and needs of individuals with Asperger Syndrome are discussed within the context of the Pyramid Approach to Education with special attention paid to proactive strategies in the areas of communication, social skills and self-management.

#### **8. Parent Training: An Adjustment in Perspective**

This workshop is designed for parents, adult family members, and others who are responsible for the care and supervision of a child with a disability. This seminar focuses on reducing or eliminating contextually inappropriate behaviors, as well as improving or increasing skill acquisition within the home and community.

#### **9. Beyond Survival Skills: A Workshop for Teaching Assistants**

This workshop will focus on the strategies that para-educators can best use to effectively work with students in classroom and mainstream settings. This workshop is appropriate for staff who are responsible for students from preschool age through high school.

### **SHORT-TALK SERIES:**

Short-Talks range from 60 minutes to a full day

#### **1. PECS Overview**

This overview is appropriate for all members of the educational team who would like to learn about the Picture Exchange Communication System. It includes a summary of the six training phases and creating effective environments for teaching PECS.

#### **2. Pyramid Approach Overview: Creating Effective Teaching Environments**

This is an overview of how to set up an effective teaching environment for students with autism or related developmental disabilities using the Pyramid Approach to Education model.

#### **3. PECS and Behavior Management**

Inappropriate behaviors are often a function of insufficient or non-existent communication skills. PECS is a functional communication strategy that can be implemented rapidly to teach alternatives to challenging behaviors.

#### **4. Transitioning Children from PECS**

How to transition from PECS to speech, picture point systems and/or voice output communication aides.

#### **5. Alternative Discrimination Strategies for PECS**

An update to the PECS training manual with strategies recently developed by Andy Bondy and Lori Frost

#### **6. PECS Myths and Facts**

With its worldwide use and broad empirical support, PECS has become almost a generic term for picture-based communication. This talk reviews and dispels many myths associated with PECS while adjoining the facts.

## **SHORT-TALK SERIES Cont.:**

Short-Talks range from 60 minutes to a full day

### **7. My Child has Autism...Now What?**

This talk is appropriate for parents and professionals who are interested in learning more about Applied Behavior Analysis including its history and trend. This is an ideal workshop for parent groups.

### **8. The Language of Emotions**

Many children, especially those with autism, have difficulty in acquiring language related to expressing emotions and identifying emotions in other people. This talk will present an analysis based upon B.F. Skinner's work and demonstrate how effective lessons can be developed as well, as identify and discuss some areas of difficulty regarding such lessons.

### **9. Administrative Issues and Autism: Coming Soon to a School Near You!**

This 3.5 hour workshop is appropriate for all school administrators who are directly or indirectly responsible for supervision and staff leadership in facilities providing instructional programs for students with special needs.

## **Consultation Services**

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Our expert consultants have extensive experience with all age groups and across many disabilities. We will be happy to work with your organization to assess your training or consultation needs and create a customized service package that provides the staff training and consultation that matches the needs of your organization. Pyramid specializes in consulting within school, home, community and work programs.

### **THE PECS SERIES:**

#### **1. PECS Start Up™**

This service focuses on teaching the beginning phases of PECS to one individual student. Parents and staff will learn how to implement the beginning Phases of PECS. The student's PECS instruction begins in Phase I and continues into additional phases as appropriate. Parents and staff learn the theory behind PECS and how to implement the initial phases.

#### **2. PECS Check Up™**

A consultant will observe parents/staff implementing PECS with a student currently using the system and will fine-tune implementation practices. This service includes parent and staff training on the next PECS phases as well as direct work with the student.

#### **3. PECS Telephone Consultation**

Pyramid offers convenient PECS and Pyramid telephone consultation for parents and educators on PECS as well as the Pyramid Approach. Telephone Consultation may be scheduled individually or as a follow-up to one of our trainings and/or consultations.

#### **4. PECS Distance Supervision**

Videos of PECS implementation or program activities averaging in length of 30-60 minutes may be sent to a consultant for consultative feedback. A consultant will review the video and provide feedback and written recommendations.

#### **5. PECS Two-Week Intensive Program**

This is a Two-week intensive program that focuses on the implementation of PECS for children 3-6 years of age. During the intensive program, students will work on communication across different activities and settings. Parents will attend the Basic PECS training as well as parent conferences.

## **Consultation Services**

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### **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING SERIES:**

#### **1. Pyramid Approach Program Evaluation**

Our consultant will observe the team's implementation of the Pyramid Approach to Education and will discuss how implementing the components of the Pyramid will strengthen the program as well as enhance learning opportunities for students.

#### **2. Pyramid Approach Classroom Consultation**

Designed to assist team members when setting up or reviewing functional training and programming, this consultation provides systematic feedback regarding all elements of the Pyramid Approach to Education in a sequential fashion.

#### **3. Pyramid Approach In-Home Consultation**

This service emphasizes what to teach as well as how to teach. Pyramid's Home/Community approach involves initial and long-term staff training as well as program and transition consultation. The focus is on functional communication training and learning through functional activities.

## **Certification**

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### **THE PECS SERIES:**

#### **1. PECS Implementer Certification**

This process provides individuals who have attended the Basic PECS Training an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to implement all phases of PECS according to the PECS protocol. Activities include submitting videos and various written work related to the PECS protocol. Being a Pyramid Certified PECS Implementer presents the opportunity to advance to the PECS Supervisory Certification.

#### **2. PECS Group Implementer Certification Skills Demonstration Day**

The purpose of this day is to provide a group of candidates from the same organization and opportunity to complete the PECS Implementer Certification process in a timelier manner by demonstrating their PECS implementation skills live rather than videotape submissions.

#### **3. PECS Supervisory Certification**

This process provides Pyramid Certified PECS Implementers the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the theory that supports PECS and the ability to effectively implement all Phases of PECS through video and written work submissions. Pyramid Certified Supervisors are permitted to supervise and train others within their organization following limited guidelines.

### **EXCELLENCE IN TRAINING SERIES:**

#### **1. Pyramid Powered Certified Classrooms**

The Pyramid Classroom Certification process combines comprehensive training, assistance in setting up a classroom and consultative guidance to support the implementation of the Pyramid Approach to Education across varied learning environments. The training consists of the Creating an Effective Environment 5-day training session and a specific number of consultation days spread across a year. Certification is achieved once all of the aspects of the Pyramid Approach are in the place within the educational setting.