Consent Form

**IRB #:**2010K2484

**Title:**Effectiveness of Using Differential Reinforcement in a Vocal Prompt Delay with Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) on Children with Autism

**Purpose**: We are graduate students at Texas State University, in San Marcos, Texas and are currently enrolled in an independent study course. The researchers can be reached for questions via email: Ben Craighead – [b.craighead@centerforautism.com](mailto:b.craighead@centerforautism.com); Korie Knapp – [KorieK@mac.com](mailto:KorieK@mac.com); Alexia Mader – [am1814@txstate.edu](mailto:am1814@txstate.edu) at any time over the course of the study. We wish to conduct this research to identify the effects of a prompt delay procedure implemented during use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) on the acquisition of spontaneous vocalizations of three children on the autism spectrum. You are being asked to allow us to conduct this research in either your home, your child’s school, or your child’s ABA clinic. You are being asked to allow your child to participate in this study because he/she has a diagnosis of autism and is currently in phase 1, 2, or 3 of PECS.

**Procedures**

**Time:** If you agree to allow your child to participate, the research will last through the remainder of the 2010-2011 school year. Researchers will spend approximately (x) hours per (day/week) with your child. X amount of time will be taken from his/her (school/clinic) instructional time. In order to minimize any loss of instructional time, the researchers will terminate the research if your child fails to demonstrate improvements using the prompt delay procedure after (x weeks/sessions). You will be notified if this should occur.

**Experimental Procedures:** Data will be collected on your child’s spontaneous vocalizations before and during the research. The intervention will consist of PECS protocol as defined in the manual, in which your child is already receiving intervention. In addition to the PECS protocol, researchers will be requiring verbalizations of your child using a model prompt, visual prompt and differential reinforcement. Regardless of the child’s verbal response, access to the reinforcer your child requests will still be allowed following fifteen seconds of attempts with prompting.

**Benefits and Risks:** It is hypothesized that the prompt delay used during PECS training will improve the participants’ spontaneous vocalization rate. The researchers believe that using this prompt will provide participants with more opportunities for vocalization, and reinforcement, which will subsequentially increase their spontaneous vocalizations. If the intervention proves successful for the participants, it can be assumed that their social interactions will be more readily understood by their communication partners, thus creating more meaningful daily interactions. While no research study is without risk, the risks for this study are relatively low. Potential risks include the following: the child may feel singled out in the classroom setting due to the 1:1 training involved; if a child shows a lack of progress, then instructional time will have been lost; until the child understands the expectations of the intervention there may be frustration on the part of the participant.

**Physical or Psychological Risks:** There are no potential physical or psychological risks associated with this proposed research study.

**Compensation:** Neither you nor your child will be given any compensation for participating in this study.

Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or jeopardy to their standing with the researchers, the school or clinic setting with which they are associated.

Pertinent questions about the general research practices, research participants’ rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512-245-3413 – [lasser@txstate.edu](mailto:lasser@txstate.edu)), Ms. Becky Northcut, Compliance Specialist (512-245-2102), or to Dr. Amanda Boutot, Graduate Advisor (eb15@txstate.edu).

All data collected over the course of the study will be kept confidential and in locked file cabinets in the home or workplace of the researchers. Following completion of the study all data will be given to the school, parents, or clinic involved. Any personal information of the participants known by the researchers will be kept confidential as well. In the case of publication or presentation at a conference, anonymity will be ensured for all participants.

All data records and record keeping will be done using a coding system to ensure that personal information is kept confidential. Data may be maintained on the researchers password protected computers, and will be destroyed following completion of the study.

A summary of the findings will be provided to participants upon completion of the study, if requested. Participants can contact any of the researchers via email to gain access to the results/findings.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

I understand everything written in this consent form.

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**Parent Signature Ben Craighead (Texas State researcher)**

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**Korie Knapp (Texas State researcher) Alexia Mader (Texas State researcher)**