



# Sam uses his PECS for communication

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—Melissa Reed ’

**Autism has made communication about a lot more than words for six-year-old Sam Jerome.**

Sam uses PECS (picture exchange communication system), to help him communicate effectively with others.

PECS allows Sam to delve through a communication book searching for pictures that depict specific items he may want or even comment on things that he sees.

“Sam started on PECS in April and as he gets more and more familiar with the system we will continue to increase the vocabulary available to him,” speech pathologist Kate Davis said.

Sam takes his PECS book with him everywhere; to school, respite and even to McDonalds.

Learning to use PECS takes a great deal of training and practice, with Speech Path-

ologists from the Roma Therapy Centre working closely and regularly with Sam and the family to help out in anyway with the book.

This week is Speech Pathology week and Sam’s case highlights how important the work Speech Pathologists do is.

Melissa Reed, one of five Queensland Health speech pathologists working in the south west, said the focus of the week will be on the communication options available for people who have severe speech difficulties.

“We are specialists who work with people of all ages who have communication difficulties,” she said.

“It is crucial to give residents with speech difficulties a ‘voice’ to be able to share their needs, thoughts, opinions, ideas and emotions.”