PECSTalk™
Getting Started

Designed for a *stress-free* transition from traditional PECS® to tablet-based communication

PYRAMID
EDUCATIONAL
CONSULTANTS

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PECSTalk™

PECSTalk™ is an AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) app used by individuals with complex communication needs, including those on the autism spectrum. Designed by the developers of the evidence-based Picture Exchange Communication System® (PECS®), this high-tech option is customizable and easy to use! With access to the complete Pics for PECS picture library, multiple voice output options, and multiple languages, the PECSTalk™ app can be individualized for your learner's needs.

With PECSTalk™, users can construct a multi-picture Sentence Strip™ via a dedicated Sentence Starter™ page and create up to 30 digital PECS book pages for the in-app voice to speak. The digital display is similar in layout to a traditional PECS Communication Book while accommodating the more robust vocabulary of a Speech Generating Device (SGD).

The PECSTalk™ app can be used to make requests, respond to questions, comment and ask questions. By converting pictures and text into spoken language, the PECSTalk™ app empowers non-speaking learners to fully participate in their school, home, vocational, and community settings.

Languages Available: English, Brazilian Portuguese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish

Foundational Skills

Pyramid Educational Consultants recommends that all learners with complex communication needs have an AAC assessment to determine which system and modality will be best suited for them. We have found, and research supports, that beginning functional communication training with the PECS protocol helps learners gain the foundational skills of initiation and social interaction prior to using a high-tech AAC app or Speech Generating Device. Research has also shown that learners often complete Phases I through IV of the low-tech PECS Communication protocol within 3-6 months and that many learners will develop sufficient speech so that there is no need for high-tech AAC.
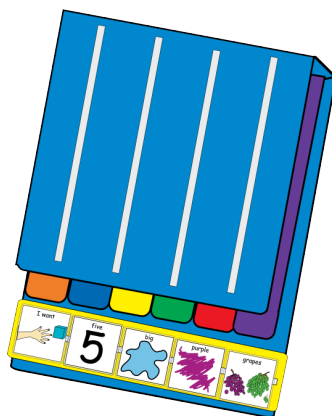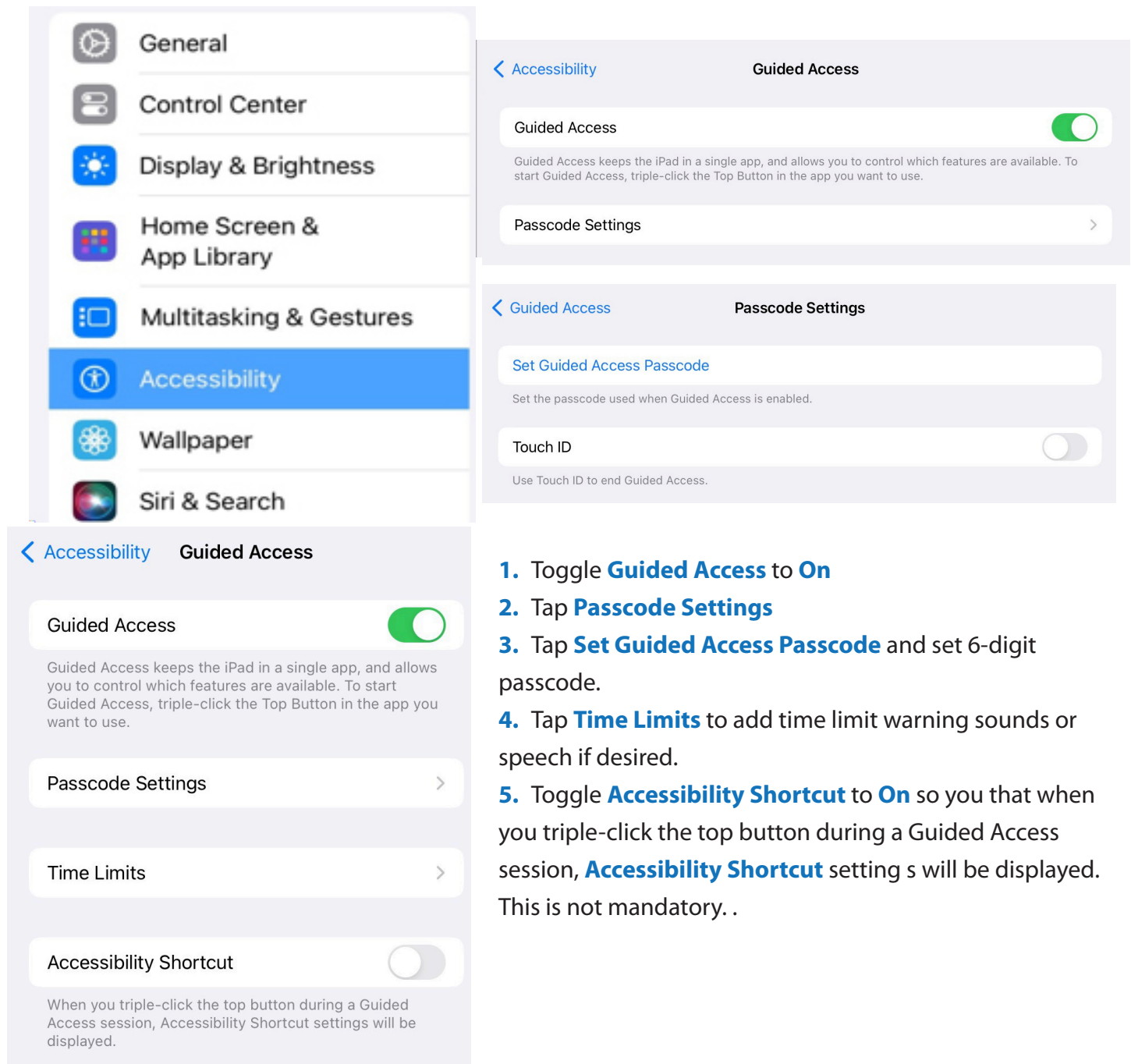
Using an App for Communication
Guided Access

When using PECSTalk™ for communication on an iPad or iPad mini, we recommend putting your Apple device in Guided Access. This restricts use of the iPad to a designated app (PECSTalk™) and disables hardware buttons. Exiting Guided Access to access other apps can only be accomplished using a 6-digit code,

To enable Guided Access on the home screen of your iPad, select the *Settings* app, then tap *Accessibility > Guided Access.*

1. Toggle **Guided Access** to **On**
2. Tap **Passcode Settings**
3. Tap **Set Guided Access Passcode** and set 6-digit passcode.
4. Tap **Time Limits** to add time limit warning sounds or speech if desired.
5. Toggle **Accessibility Shortcut** to **On** so you that when you triple-click the top button during a Guided Access session, **Accessibility Shortcut** setting s will be displayed. This is not mandatory. .

To use Guided Access

1. Launch PECSTalk™
2. Triple-click on the iPad top button.
3. Circle areas of the screen to limit access to those functions (if any).
4. Tap on **Options** in the bottom left to choose whether or not to grant access to Sleep/Wake, Volume, touch screen and motion. Tap **Start**.

Once Guided Access is enabled, leaving Guided Access requires triple-clicking the top button, entering the 6-digit passcode, and then tapping **End.**

Screen Rotation Lock

The PECSTalk™ app is best used in landscape mode on your device. iPad® however, will automatically default to the portrait orientation unless the rotation lock is set to prevent the device from entering the default orientation. When using PECSTalk™ on your device, we recommend that you enable the rotation lock so that your screen stays in landscape mode for best use of the app. This will lock the screen so that the view does not change when the device is rotated.

To enable the *Screen Rotation Lock* on the home screen of your iPad, open the *Control Center* by swiping down fom the top-right corner of the screen. down the *Control Center* from the top right corner of your screen, then tap the *Rotation Lock Icon*.
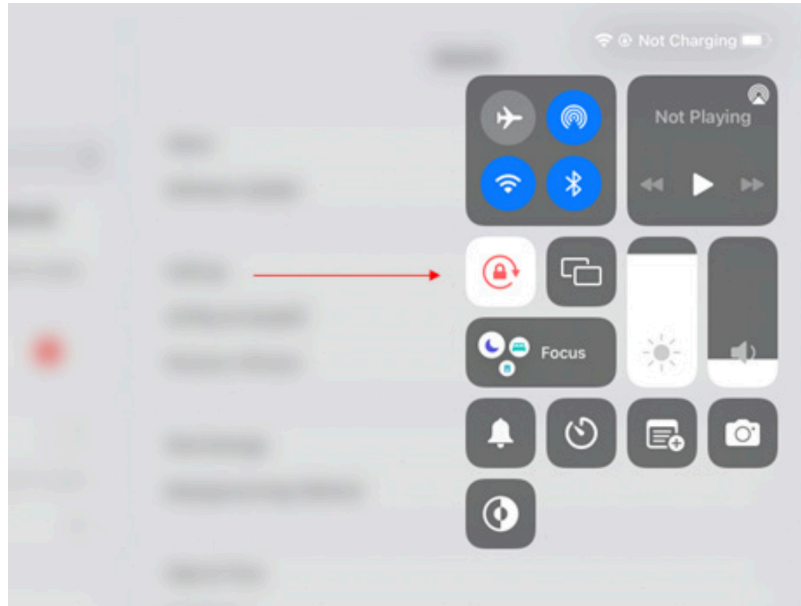

Portrait Mode

Landscape Mode

To use Screen Rotation Lock

1. Pull down the **Control Center** from by swiping down from the top-right coner of your devices screen.
2. Make sure your iPad is in the orientation you'd like it to be locked in.
3. Underneath the system functions (Airplane Mode, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, etc.), tap on the **Rotation Lock** icon (padlock with a circular arrow around it).


On older iPads (before iPad Air), there is a switch on the right side of the iPad that can be used to rotate the screen. You'll just need to go into *Settings > General* and switch the setting from mute to *Lock Rotation.*
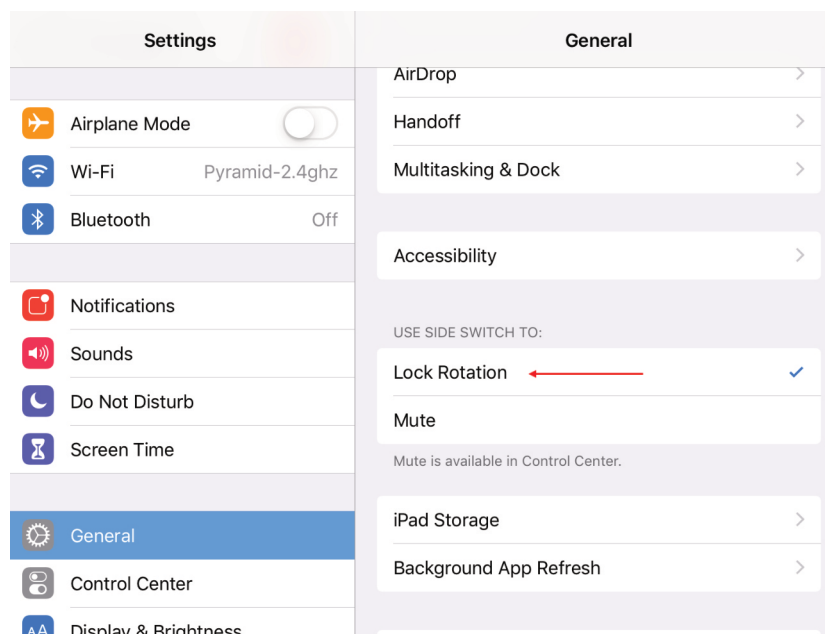
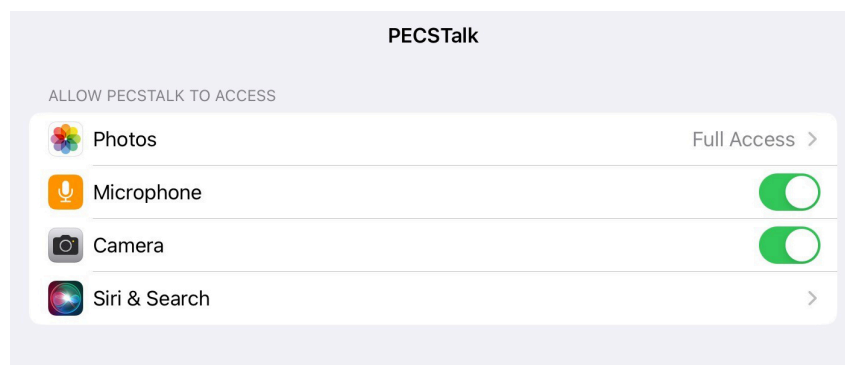# Enabling Your Device's Camera and Microphone Permissions

Because the PECSTalk™ app requires the use of your device's Camera and Microphone to properly function you will want to make sure that your PECSTalk™ app has permission to use your device's camera and microphone before you begin using the app. You can enable permission for the camera and microphone through your device settings.

To enable camera and microphone permissions on the home screen of your iPad, select the *Settings* app, then tap *PECSTalk*.
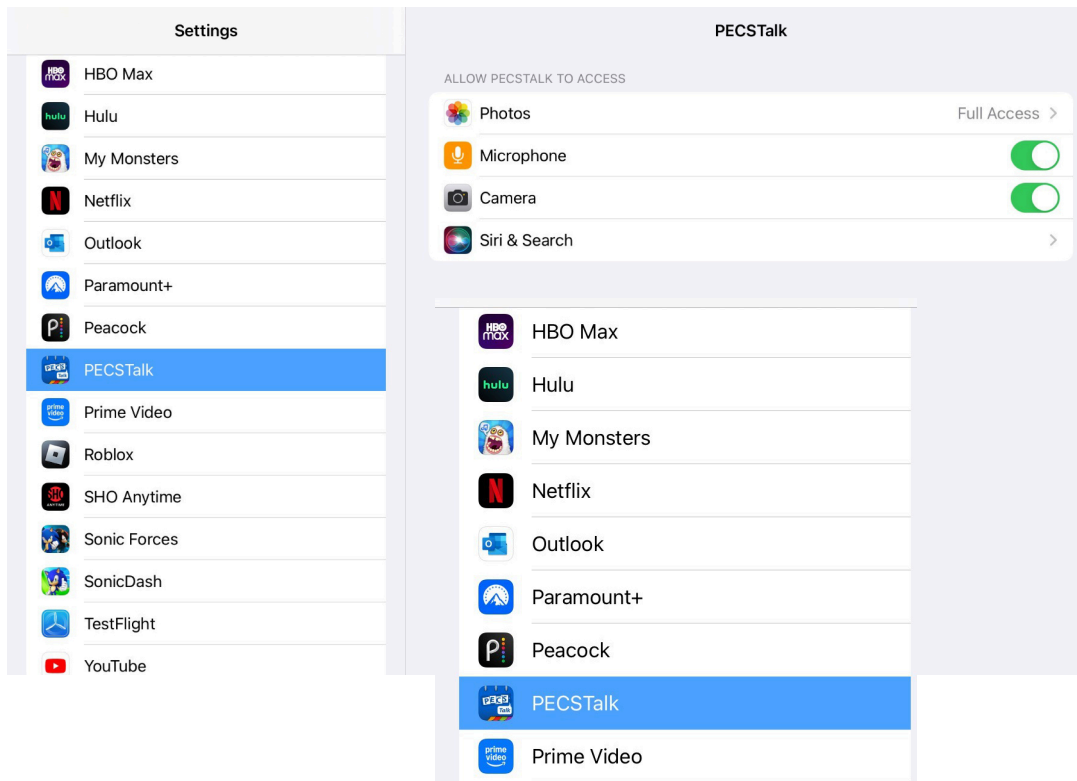
1. Select the **Settings** app.

2. Scroll to the list of apps at the bottom of the left-hand menu and select the **PECSTalk** app icon.

3. You will see **"ALLOW PECSTalk™ TO ACCESS"**, listed below that you will see the Camera and Microphone. Toggle both switches to Green to allow access.
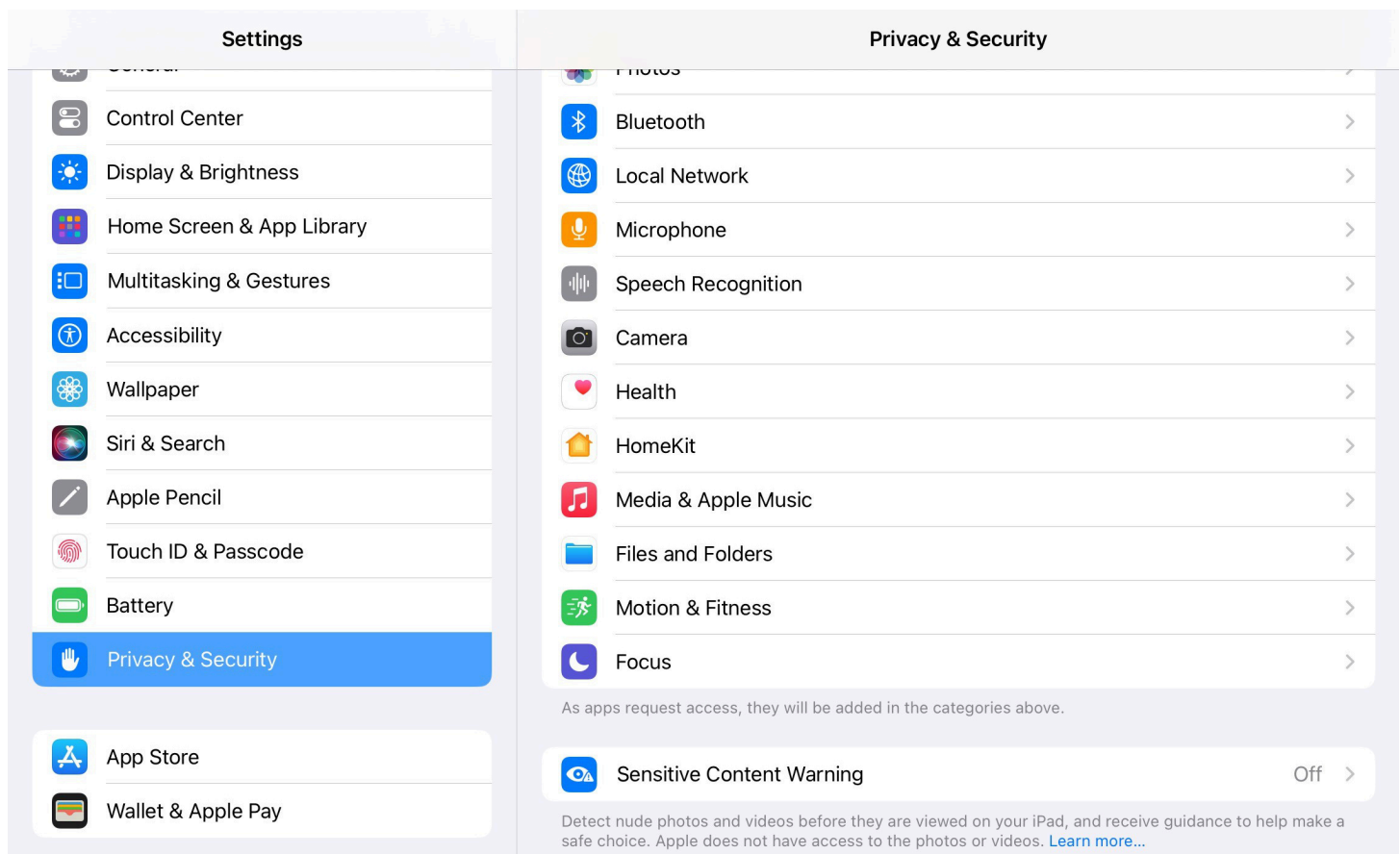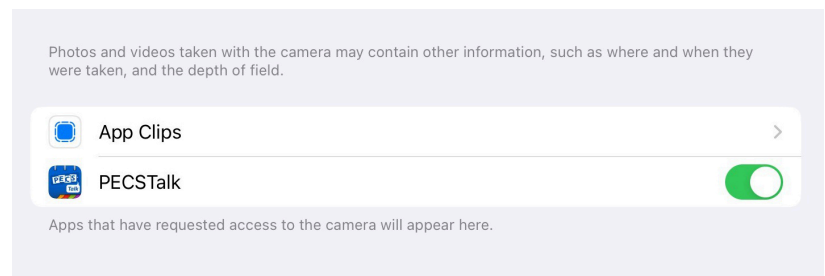
Checking Your Device's Privacy Settings

Another way to check to see if your PECSTalk™ app has permission to use your device's camera and microphone is by checking your devices **Privacy & Security** settings.

To check your devices privacy settings:

1. Select the **Settings** app.

2. Scroll down to **Privacy & Security** and select it.

3. Select **Camera** or **Microphone** from the Privacy list.

4. You will then see a list of apps on your device that require permissions to use the selected function. Next to **PECSTalk** app toggle the switch to Green.

Photos and videos taken with the camera may contain other information, such as where and when they were taken, and the depth of field.

▢	App Clips	›
▣	PECSTalk	⬤

Apps that have requested access to the camera will appear here.

Settings	Privacy & Security

Settings
⚙ General
▣ Control Center
☀ Display & Brightness
▦ Home Screen & App Library
▣ Multitasking & Gestures
ⓧ Accessibility
✿ Wallpaper
◐ Siri & Search
✎ Apple Pencil
◉ Touch ID & Passcode
▭ Battery
✋ Privacy & Security
ⓐ App Store
▭ Wallet & Apple Pay

Privacy & Security	
▦ Photos	›
✷ Bluetooth	›
⊕ Local Network	›
🎤 Microphone	›
▥ Speech Recognition	›
▣ Camera	›
♥ Health	›
⌂ HomeKit	›
♪ Media & Apple Music	›
▭ Files and Folders	›
🏃 Motion & Fitness	›
☾ Focus	›

As apps request access, they will be added in the categories above.

▣	Sensitive Content Warning	Off ›

Detect nude photos and videos before they are viewed on your iPad, and receive guidance to help make a safe choice. Apple does not have access to the photos or videos. Learn more...

Using an App for Communication

Text-to-Speech Engine

On certain Android devices and with certain languages (Japanese, Chinese, and Korean), specifically Samsung Galaxy devices, users may need to switch their text-to-speech service engine from Samsung text-to-speech engine to the Google text-to-speech engine in order to use the voice output in the PECSTalk app. If you encounter this issue, please follow the below steps:

If using a Samsung Galaxy Device:
- Open your device **Settings**.
- Swipe down and tap **General management.**
- Tap **Text-to-Speech.**
- Choose the Google text-to-speech engine.

For all non-Samsung Galaxy devices, or if the above instructions do not work, try the following:
- Open your device **Settings.**
- Select **Accessibility** and then tap. **TalkBack** menu. (the TalkBack feature may remain toggled **off**).
- Tap **Settings,** and the **Talk Back settings** menu will open.
- Tap tap **Text-to-speech settings**.
- Tap **Preferred engine.**
- Choose **Speech Recognition and Synthesis from Google.**

Please contact your device manufacturer if none of the above works for you.

App Pinning

When using an Android device with PECSTalk for communication, we recommend utilizing App Pinning. This restricts use of the device to a designated app (PECSTalk) and disables hardware buttons. A passcode may also be set to block users from disabling the screen pinning feature.

To enable App Pinning on the home screen of your device, go to *Settings* on your device.

1. Open **Security and privacy** and select **More security settings.**
2. Scroll down to the **Pin App** option and enable it.
3. Select the app you want to pin and tap the recent button or swipe up from the bottom of the screen and hold. Tap the icon above the app and select **Pin this app.**

Screen Rotation Lock

When Auto Rotate is enabled, PECSTalk's screen orientation will automatically adjust and rotate depending on how you are holding your device. PECSTalk is best used in landscape mode. To lock PECSTalk in landscape mode or sideways position for use, you will need to disable the Auto Rotate setting on your device. This will lock the screen so that the view does not change when the device is rotated.

To disable **Auto Rotate**:
- Position your device in a horizontal or sideways position.
- On your device home screen, swipe down from the top of the screen to open the notification bar.
- Locate the Auto Rotate icon, tap the icon to disable the feature and enable Landscape Mode.
- When Landscape Mode is enabled, the Auto Rotate icon will be replaced by the Landscape Mode icon.

The **Auto Rotate** icon looks like a small phone surrounded by two arrows. The icon will glow blue or white when enabled.

The **Landscape Mode** icon looks like a gray lock positioned sideways and locks the screen in the sideways position.

Landscape
Mode

Enabling Your Device's Camera and Microphone Permissions

Because the PECSTalk app requires the use of your device's Camera and Microphone to properly function, you will want to make sure that PECSTalk has permission to use your device's camera and microphone before you begin using the app. You can enable permission for the camera and microphone through your device settings.

To enable camera and microphone permissions on the home screen of your device, go to **Settings** **> Apps > PECSTalk > Permissions.**
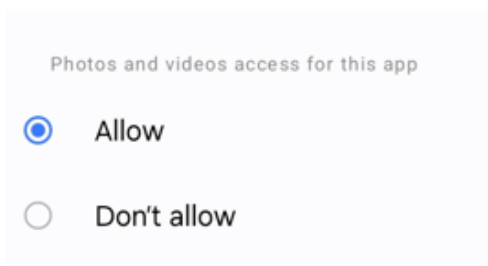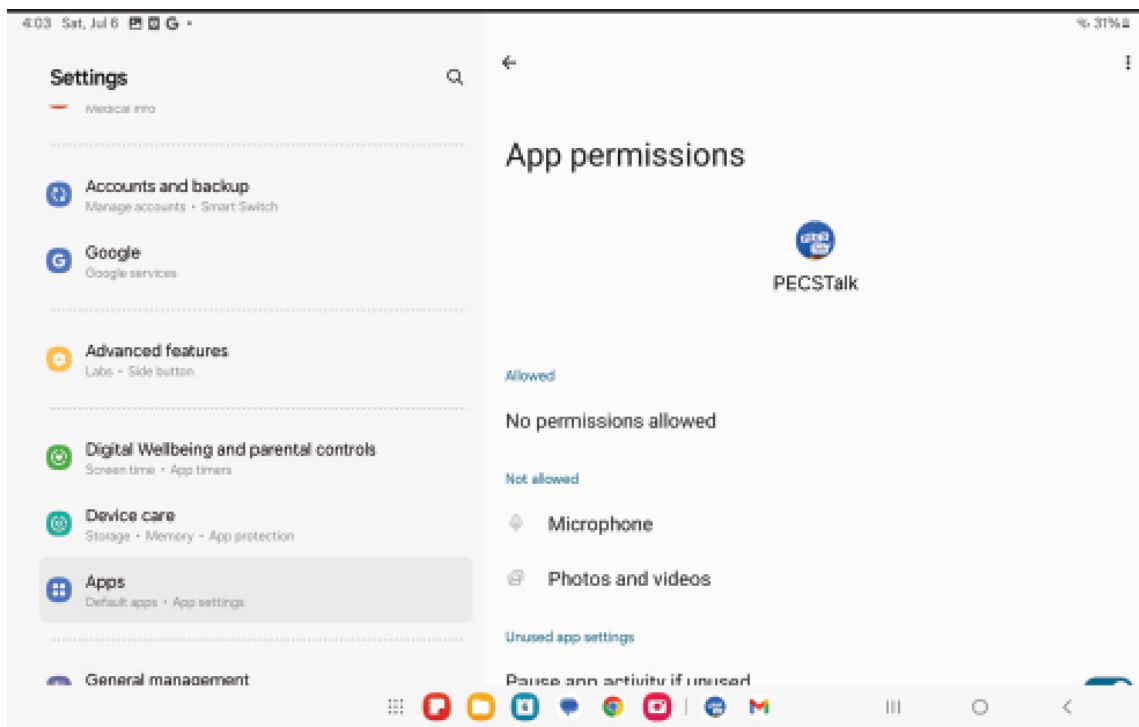
Tap **Photos and videos** and select **Allow.**

Tap **Microphone** and select **Allow only while using the app.**
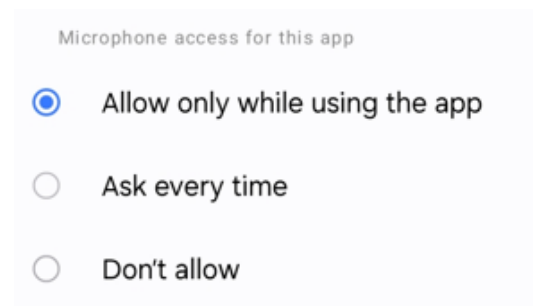
The Opening Screen

When you open the app for the first time, the PECS book will be blank. This is so that you can build a book identical to your student's traditional PECS book. Tap on the **Book** icon to create your student's book.

Dedicated Sentence Starter Page

Add additional tabbed pages

Customize Page

Settings
Help
Information
Backups

Add and switch between books

Lock Screen

Picture Library

Settings • Help • Information • Backups

Setting
Help
Information
Backups

Settings

General Setting

Pictures Snap to Strip

Lock Screen Orientation

Use Keypad to Unlock Editing
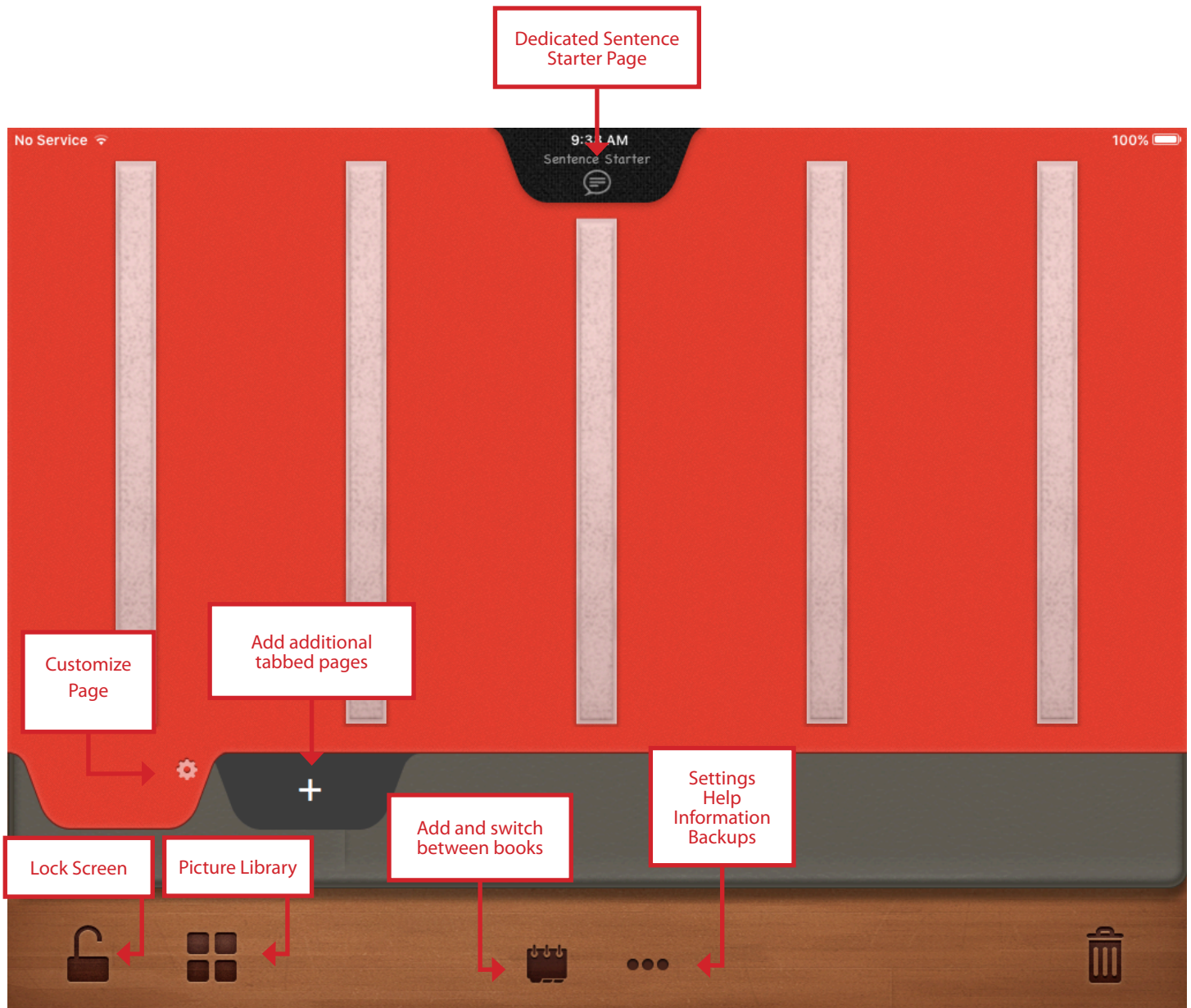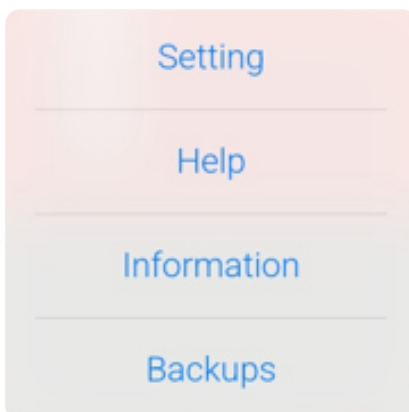
Picture Library Language   English (US)
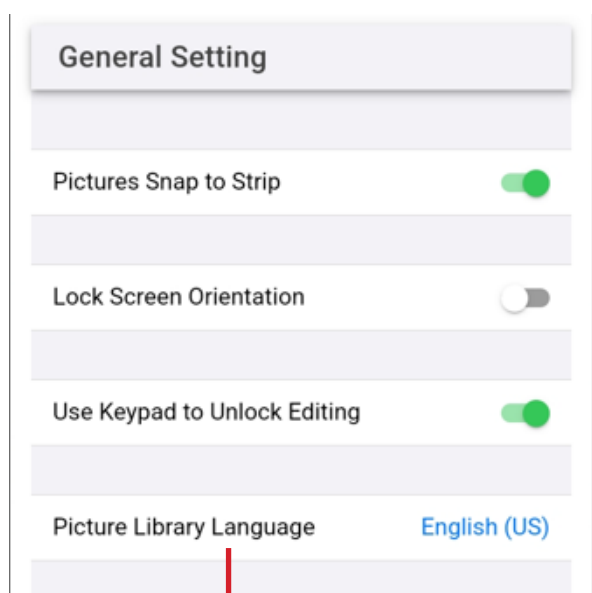
Automatically align the pictures with VELCRO® strips

Lock Screen orientation to Landscape mode

Make Keypad UNLOCK function available

Choose a language for pictures and speech

← Picture Library Language

English (US)
English (GB)
Español
Français
Deutsch
Ελληνικά
日本語

Help

Toggle between different pages for helpful hints for using the app.

Information

Toggle between pages to read about PECSTalk or PECS

Foundational skills recommended before transitioning to PECSTalk

A description of several unique features of PECSTalk

Backups

Create a Backup file
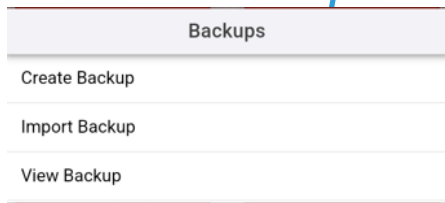
To backup the current book created within PECSTalk tap **Create Backup.** The Backup file will save directly to your device. The following message will appear once the backup has been successfully created:

Share a Backup with another person or device

To share a previously created backup with another person or device tap **View Backup**. Choose the file you would like to share from the list. Tap **Share**. The selected backup may be shared via email or cloud services such as Dropbox or GoogleDrive. *Saved backups created on Apple devices may be shared with Android tablets and vice versa*.*
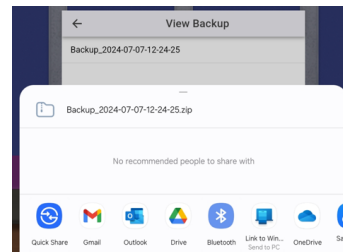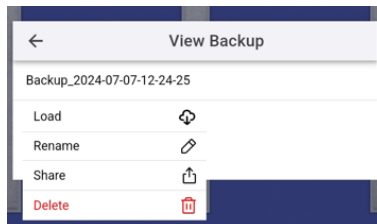
Rename a Backup file

It is also possible to rename backup files. To rename a backup file tap **View Backup**, select the file you want to rename and tap **Rename.** Type in the desired file name and then tap **OK.**
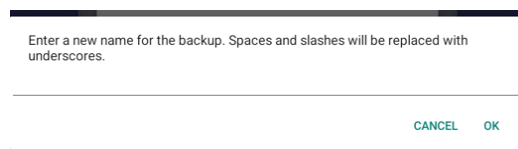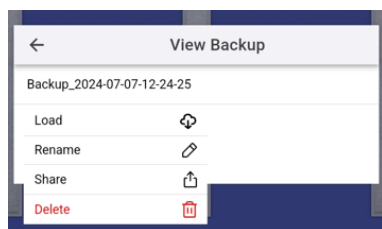
Import Backup

*Before importing a new backup, be sure to create a backup file of the books you have open. If not, the imported backup will overwrite your current books.* To import a new backup into PECSTalk tap **Import Backup**, select desired file to backup, and double tap to import the backup into the app.

In order to be able to share saved books between platforms (Apple and Android), the PECSTalk app must be installed on both devices.
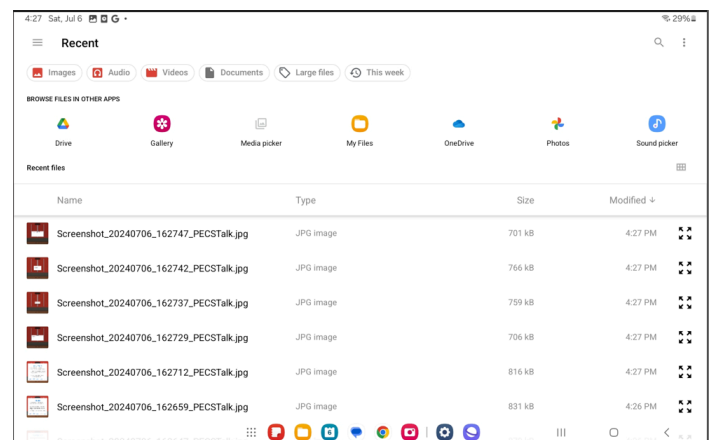
Add and Switch Between Books

To begin creating your student's PECSTalk book, tap **New Book** and give the book a name.
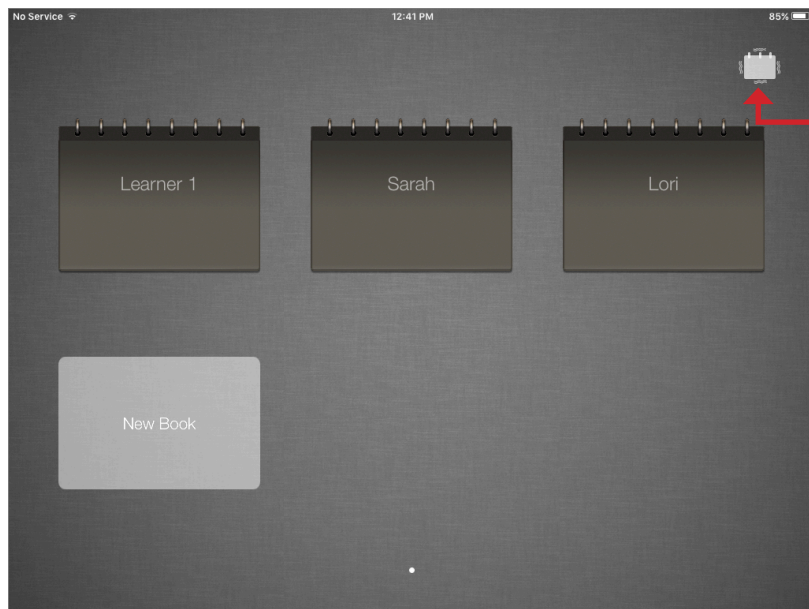

Each book holds 30 pages with up to 28 pictures per page with 3 scrollable pages (up to 2,520 pictures per book). If your student requires additional pages, create additional books.
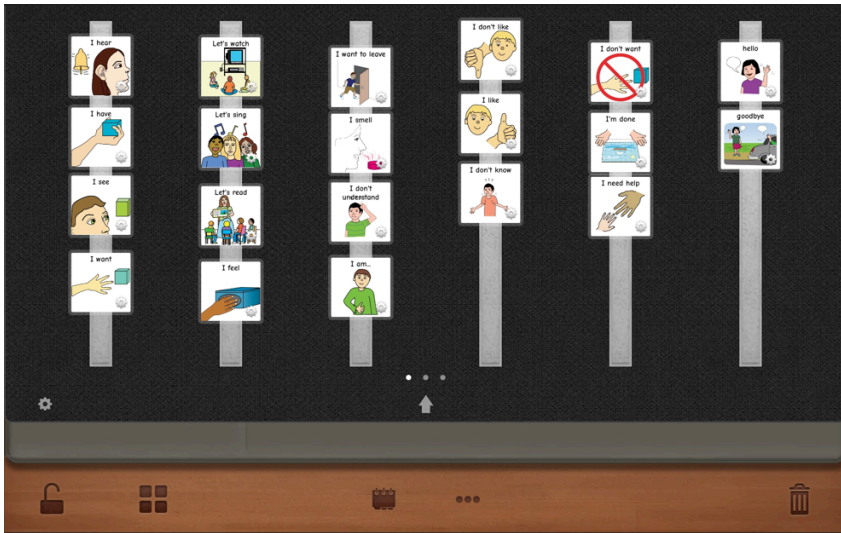
To delete a book, hold button and follow on-screen prompts.

Picture Library

To begin adding pictures to your student's book, open the library and choose images from the Sentence Starter folder, the Pics for PECS library or add pictures from your own library to the customizable User Library.
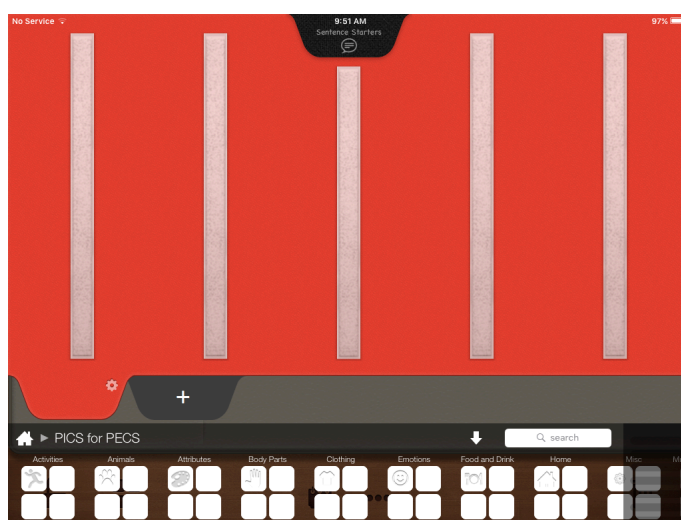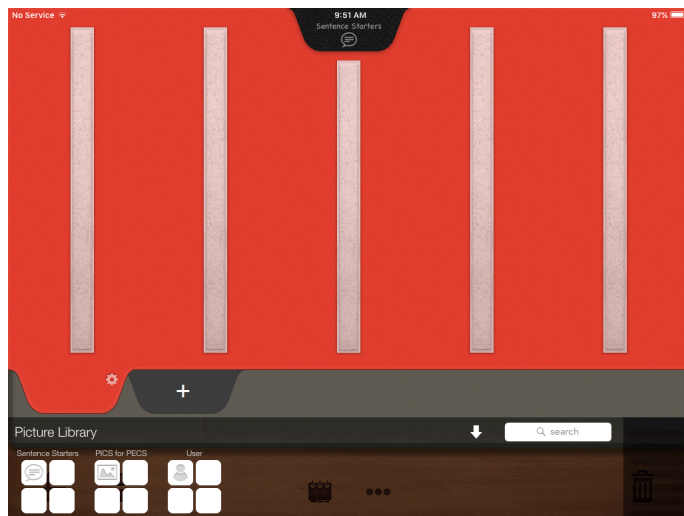
Create Sentence Starter Pages

First create your student's Sentence Starter page. Tap or drag and drop a picture onto the dedicated Sentence Starter page.

# Add Additional Tabbed Pages
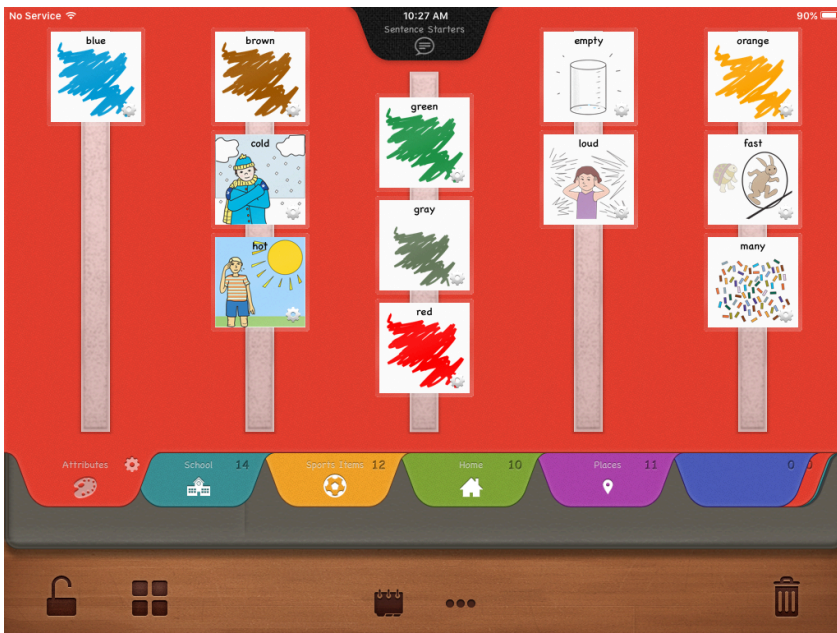
Add pages to the book and continue adding pictures by dragging pictures from the library onto the desired page.

Add Multiple Pictures at One Time

To add multiple pictures to a tabbed page at one time tap and hold a picture from the picture library until a green check mark appears on top of the image. Tap as many additional pictures from the same category as desired.
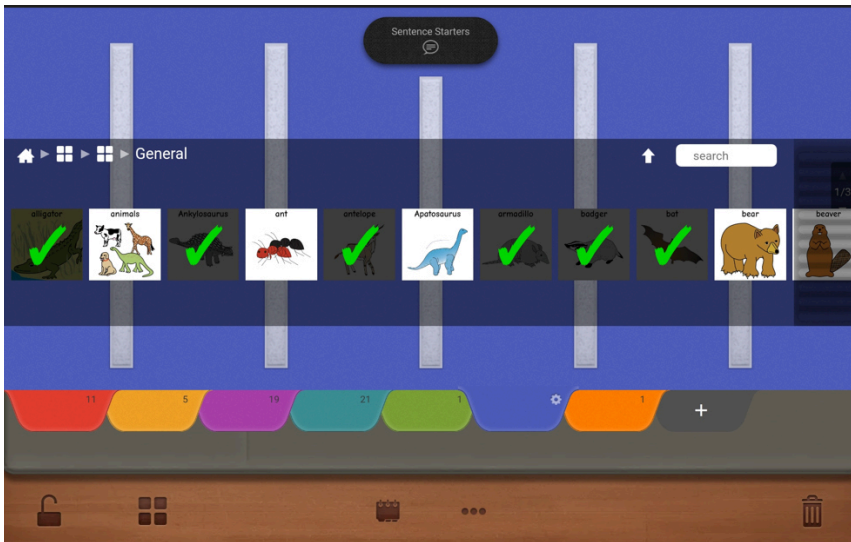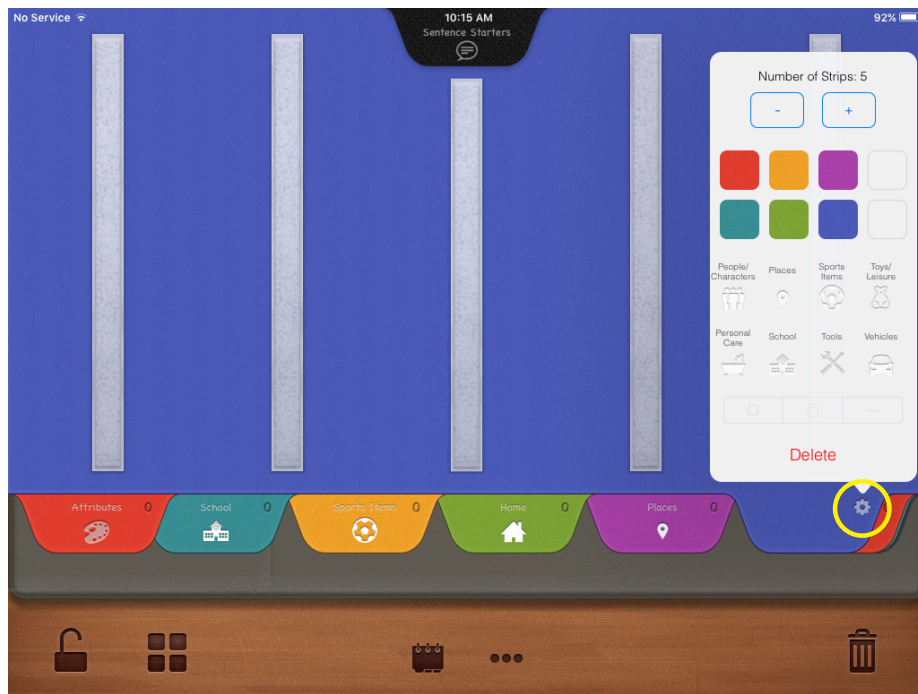

Once you have selected all the pictures you would like to add to the page, move all images to the tabbed page by doing a fling motion.
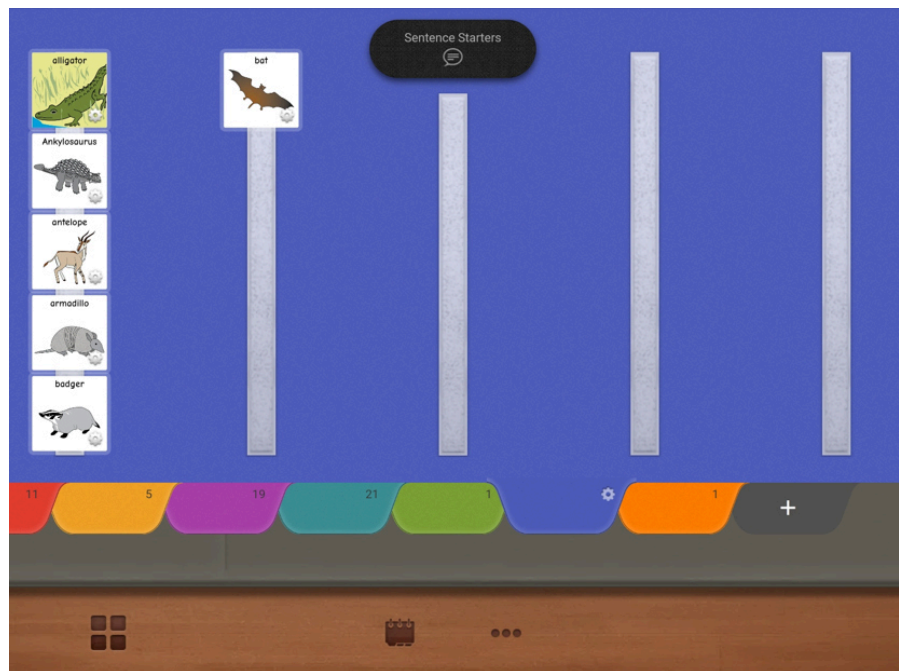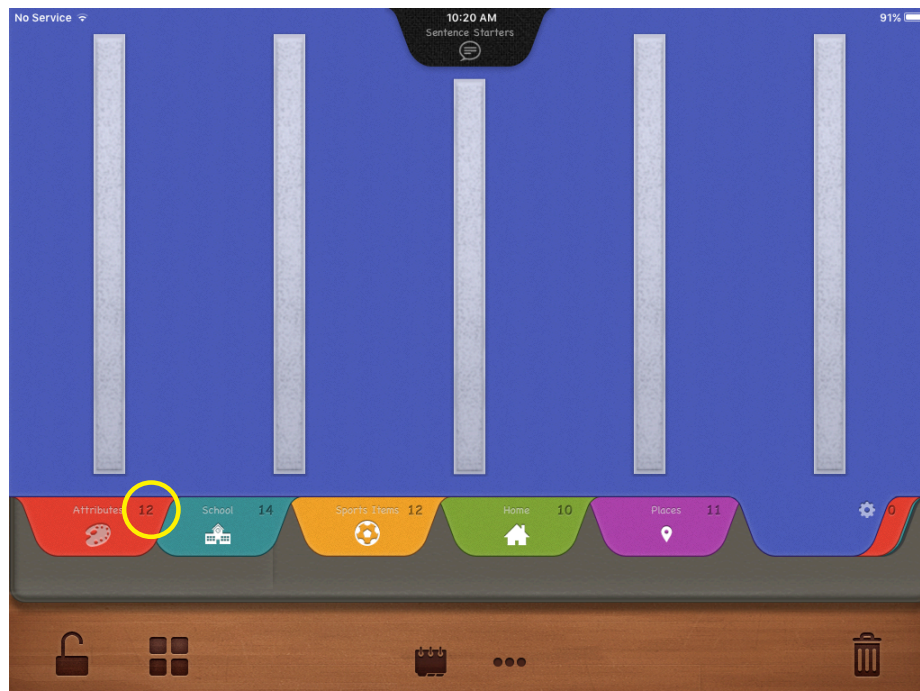
Customize a Page

To customize a page click on the **Gear** icon on the tab. Choose the number of VELCRO® strips (up to 7 max), color of page, and/or icon for tab.


Create and customize up to 30 pages per book with up to 28 pictures per page. The number on each tab represents the number of pictures on that page. To rearrange pages, hold a tab and drag to the new location.

Begin Communication Mode

Once you have created your PECS book, you are ready to start teaching your student to use PECSTalk to communicate! Please visit **www.pecs.com** for more information on transitioning from PECS to PECSTalk.

To begin Communication Mode, click on the **Lock** icon and choose a profile. This profile will determine how your student moves pictures from a PECS book page to the Sentence Strip. Additional features are available when you create a Custom Profile.
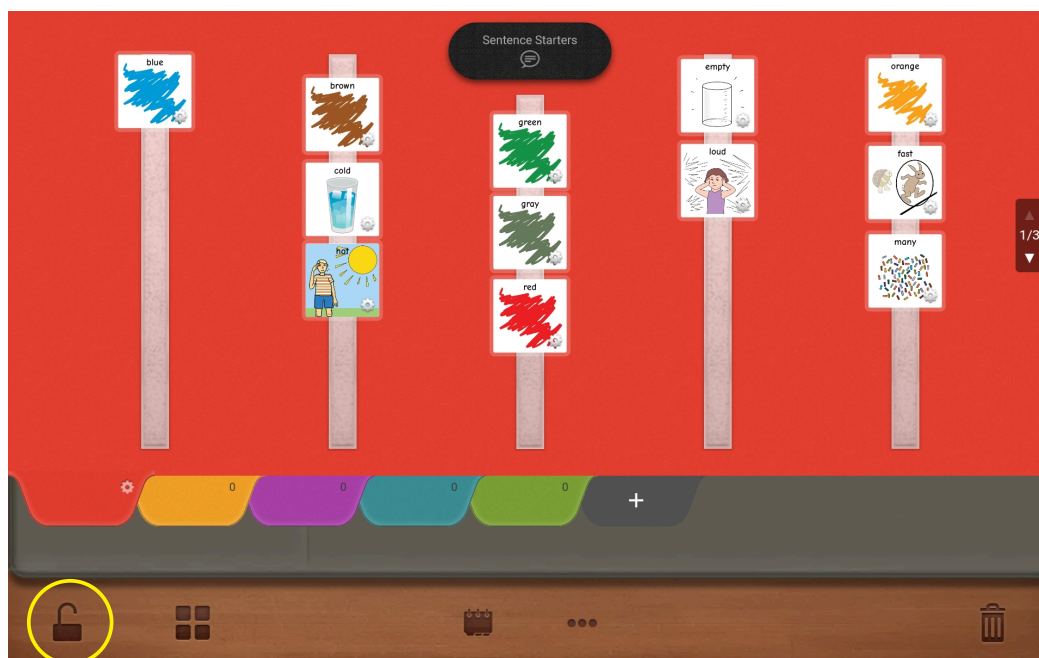
Choose an included profile or create your own profile.
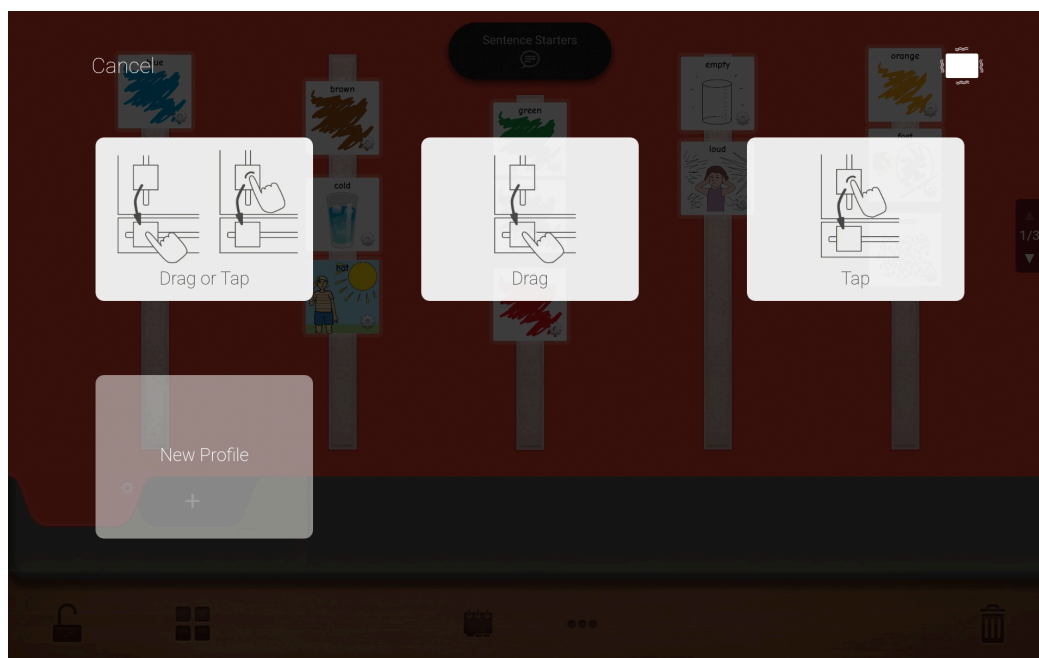
Create a Custom Profile

Selection Method
- Student drags picture to Sentence Strip.
- Student taps picture to move it to
  Sentence Strip.
- Either option.

Number of taps to reset pictures
Choose how many taps on **Clear** button to clear the Sentence Strip.

SENTENCE	
Selection method	Drag or Tap >
Number of taps to reset pictures	2 >
Shake to reset	⬜
Hide Starter Page after selection	🟢

Shake to reset
Toggle on or off. Student can either clear Sentence Strip by tapping **Clear** button or by shaking the device.

Hide Sentence Starter Page after selection
Toggle on or off.
In the **On** position, once the student moves a picture from the Sentence Starter page to the Sentence Strip, the Sentence Starter Page automatically closes.
In the **Off** position, the student must manually close the Sentence Starter Page by tapping the tab.

Speech Synthesizer
Choose language

Play when selected
Toggle on or off.
In the **On** position, each picture is spoken as the student moves it to the Sentence Strip.
In the **Off** position, pictures are not spoken until the student selects the **Speak** button.

Tap to play on Sentence Strip
Toggle on or off.
In the **On** position, student can tap each picture on the Sentence Strip to speak that picture.
In the **Off** position, the student's picture will not be spoken as the student taps.

Position
Toggle on or off.
In the **On** position, pictures can be rearranged on tabbed pages.
In the **Off** position, pictures cannot be rearranged on tabbed pages.

Size
Toggle on or off.
In the **On** position, pictures can be resized on tabbed pages.
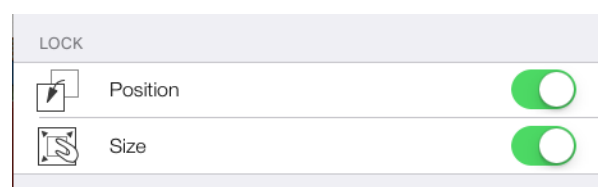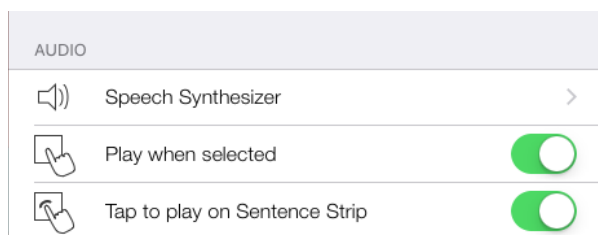In the **Off** position, pictures cannot be resized on tabbed pages.

Read text at bottom if exists
Toggle on or off to read text added to bottom of each picture (toggle on when using bilingual books).
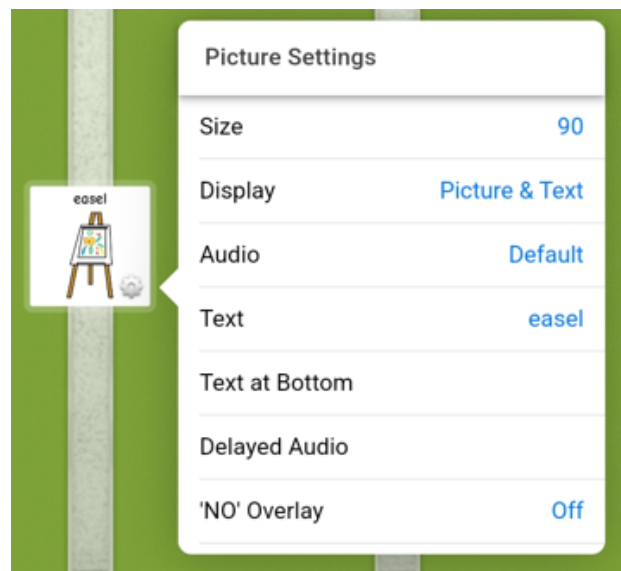

Read from right
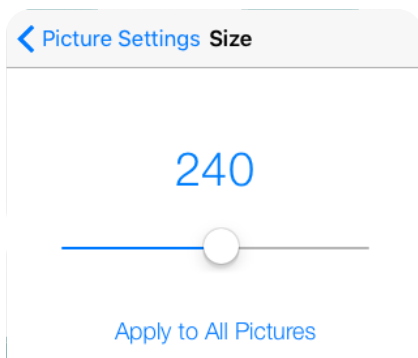Toggle on to read Sentence Strip from right to left.
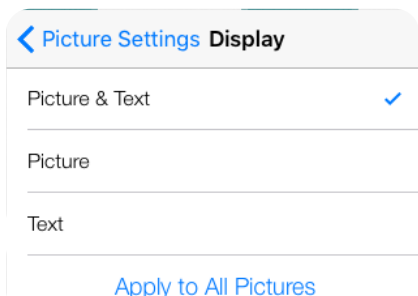
Customize Pictures

Tap the **Gear** icon in the corner of the picture to customize.
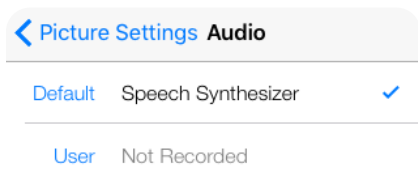

Customization Options

Slide to increase or decrease the **size** of a picture. Choose to apply to a single picture or all pictures in the PECS book.
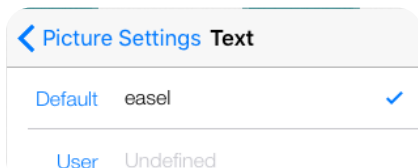

Choose to **display**:
- Picture & Text
- Picture only
- Text only

Audio
Default: Speech Synthesizer will speak the text
User: Record your own text to speak

Text for top line of picture
Choose default text or create your own for the app to read.

Add a line of **text to the bottom** of the picture by creating your own label or by choosing from additional languages.

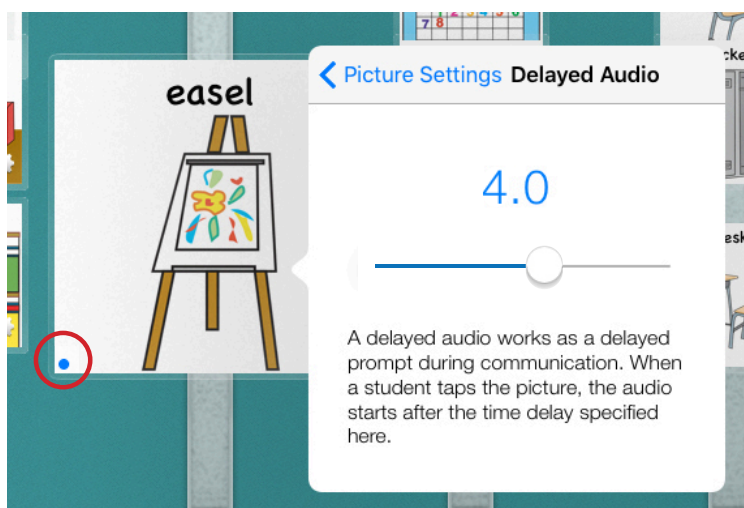Choose to use the **Delayed Audio** feature by setting delay length. The Delayed Audio feature incorporates the Constant Time delay strategy used within the PECS protocol to encourage the student to speak.

When selected for a specific picture, a blue dot will appear in the lower left corner of that symbol. Select this feature for each picture the student has learned to speak.

'NO' Overlay Feature

Indicate that a specific picture is not currently available by turning on the **'NO' Overlay** feature.
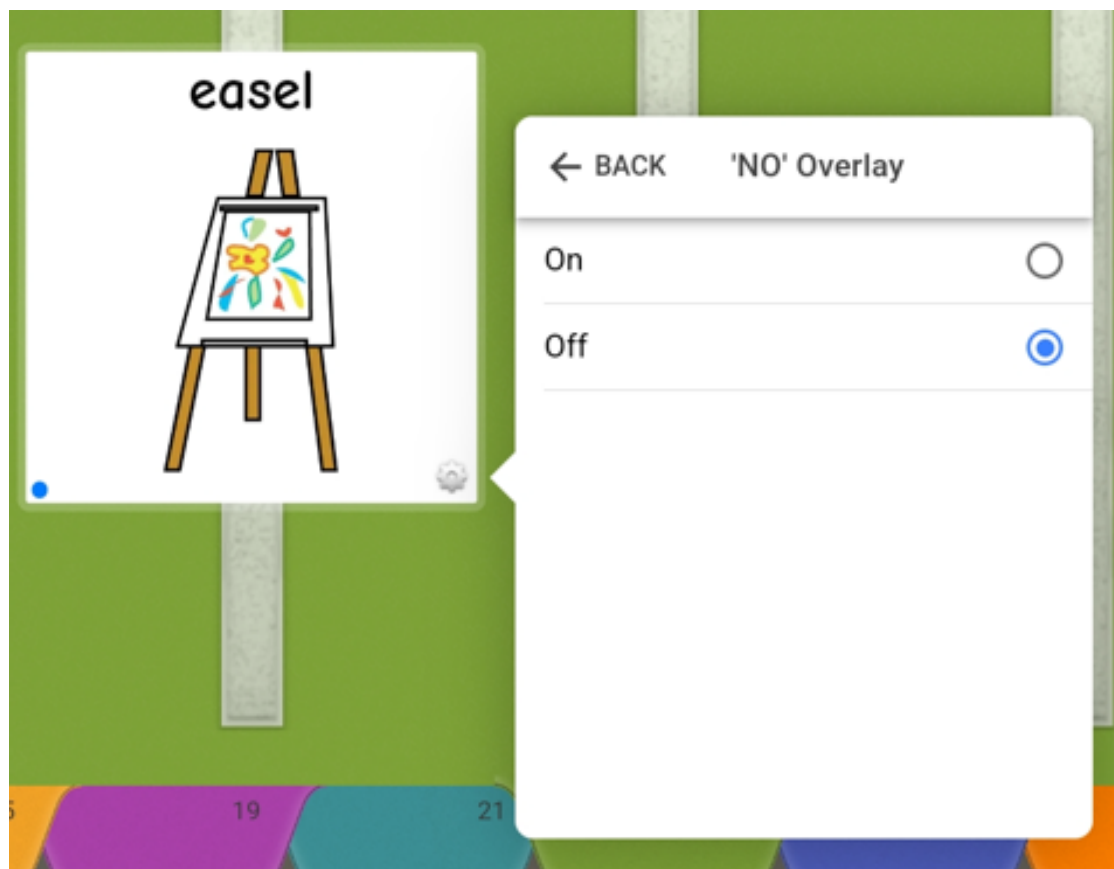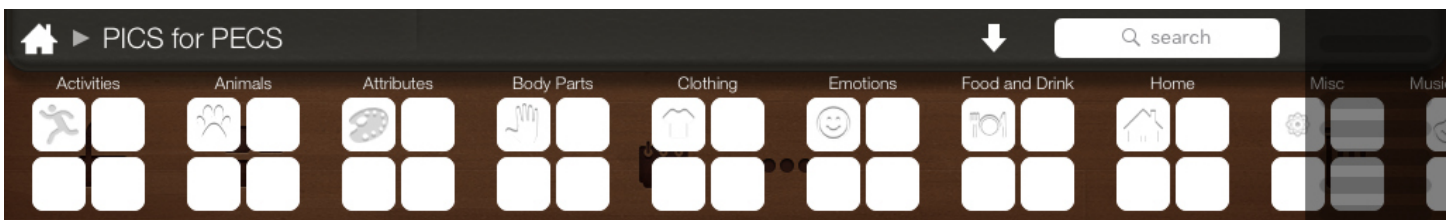
Picture Libraries

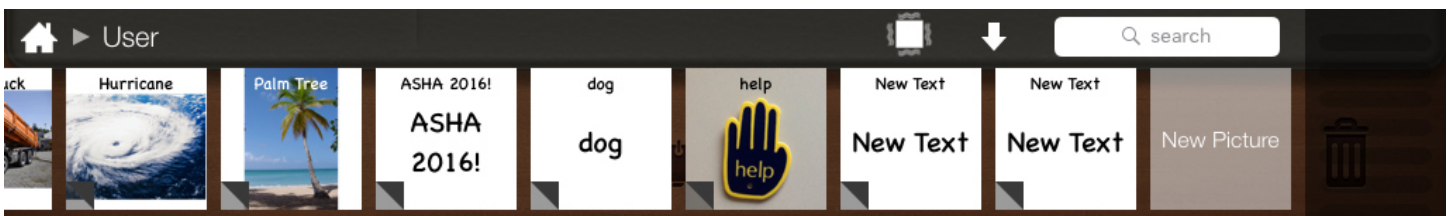Choose from 3 libraries: **Sentence Starters**, **Pics for PECS**, **User**

Choose from any of the Pics for PECS images from the **Sentence Starters Library** to add to the dedicated Sentence Starter Page.
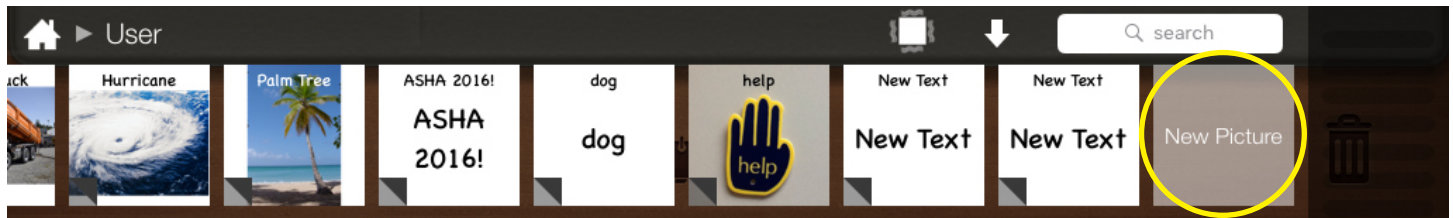

Open a folder within the **Pics for PECS Library** and choose pictures to replicate those in your student's **PECS Book**.
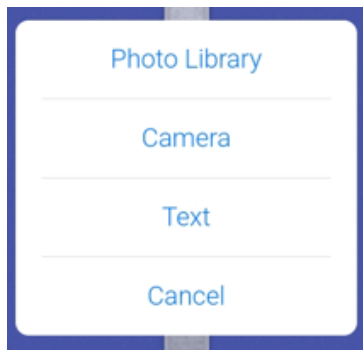

Add and customize pictures to your **User Library.**

User Library

To add pictures to your User Library, tap **New Picture**.

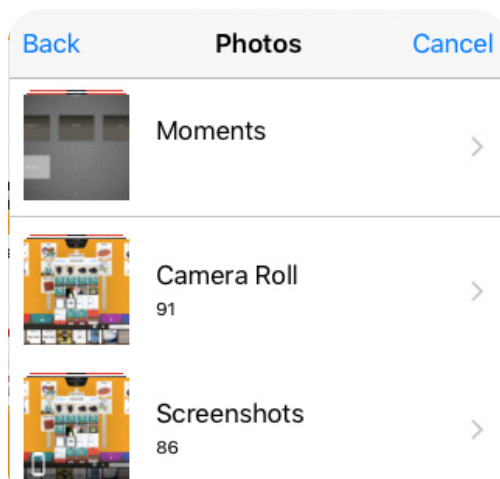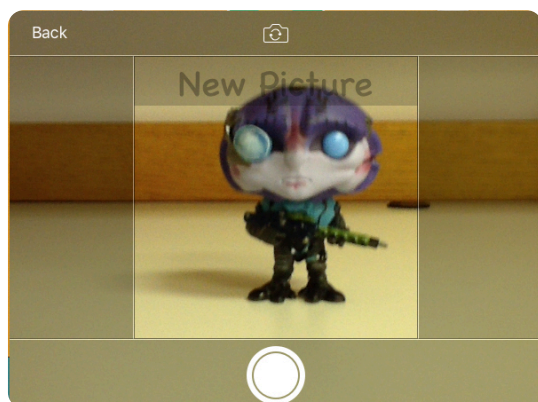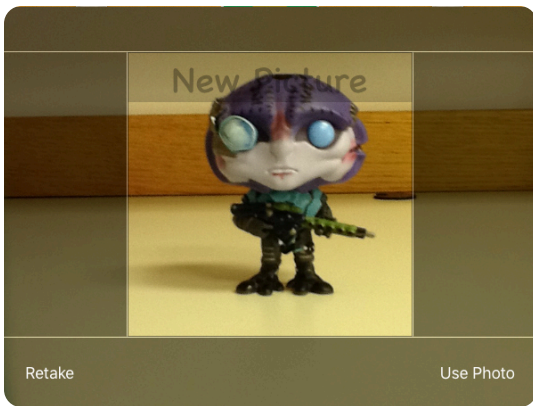Select any option from menu.

Photo Library option
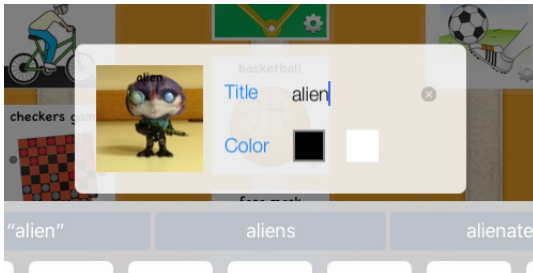Choose **Photo Library** to open the photo library within your device.

Camera option
To take a new picture, choose **Camera**. If prompted to allow PECSTalk to access your device's camera, select **OK**. Take a picture of the new item and choose **Retake** or **Use Photo**.

Use 2 fingers to scale or rotate the picture. Drag the picture into the square frame and select **DONE**.

Give your picture a title and choose the color for the text. This will be the word spoken by the synthesized speech.
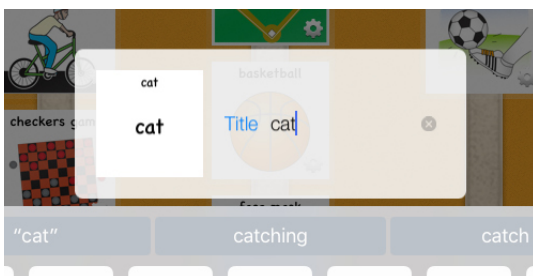
Text Option
To create a text-only symbol, Tap **TEXT** and enter the text.
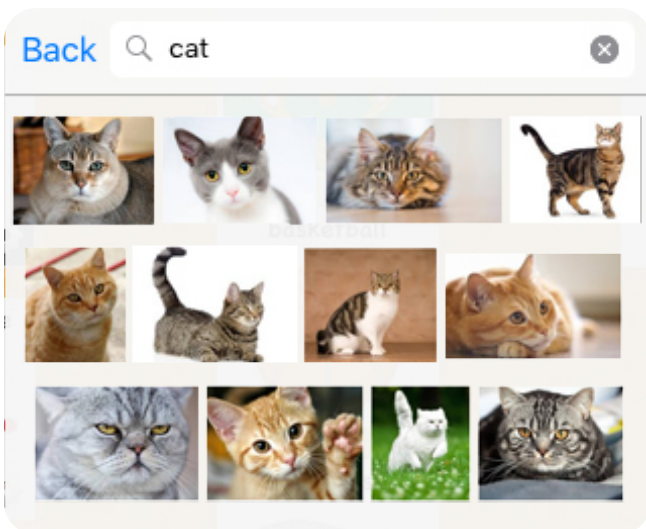
Additional Option for Web Images

1. Close the app and open Google search engine.

2. Search for the necessary image via Google.

3. Once you locate the desired image, take a screen shot of the image using your device. The screen shot should now be accessible via your pictures folder.

4. Open the app and import the image via the import from photo library feature.

Customize User Pictures and Library
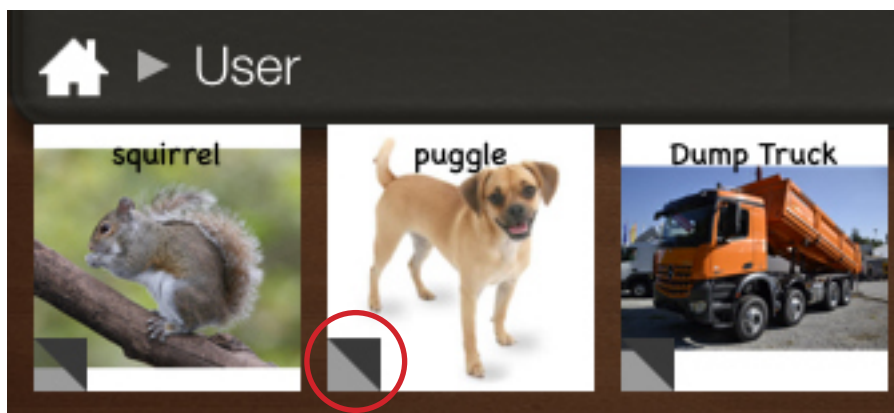
Tap the gray/black box in the lower left corner of pictures in your User Library to **edit the text** on the picture.
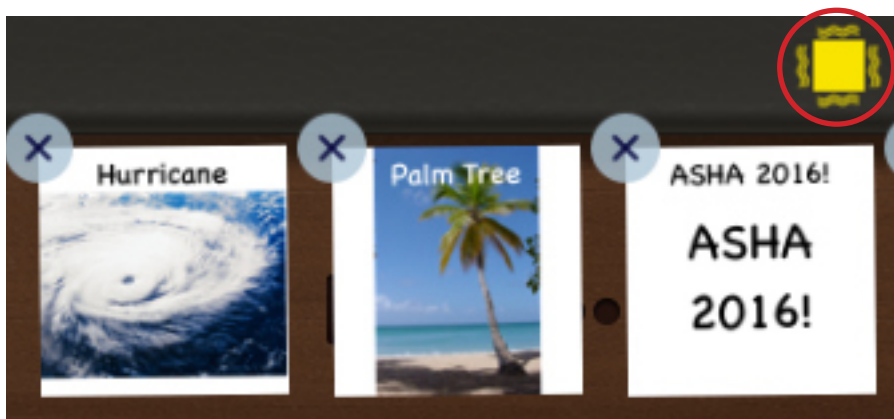
Tap the **EDIT** button and tap **X** to delete a picture.

Communication Mode

Teach your student to use the app for communication! Because the digital PECS book you have created looks just like your student's traditional PECS book, the only skills to teach your student are:

1. To open the Sentence Starter page by tapping the black tab.
2. To drag or drop a picture onto the Sentence Strip.
3. Open a tabbed page containing the pictures to add the Sentence Strip and drag or drop a picture onto the Sentence Strip.
4. Read the Sentence Strip, either by tapping each picture to speak or by tapping the **Speak** button (depending on what is selected in your profile).
5. Clear the Sentence Strip by
    1. Swiping individual pictures back towards the book. They will be moved back to their correct tabbed page.
    2. Shaking the device if this option is selected in your profile.
    3. Tapping the **Clear** button.

PECSTalk provides visual cues for these skills.

As each picture is touched, it is highlighted with a yellow frame.

The yellow frame remains while the picture is being dragged.
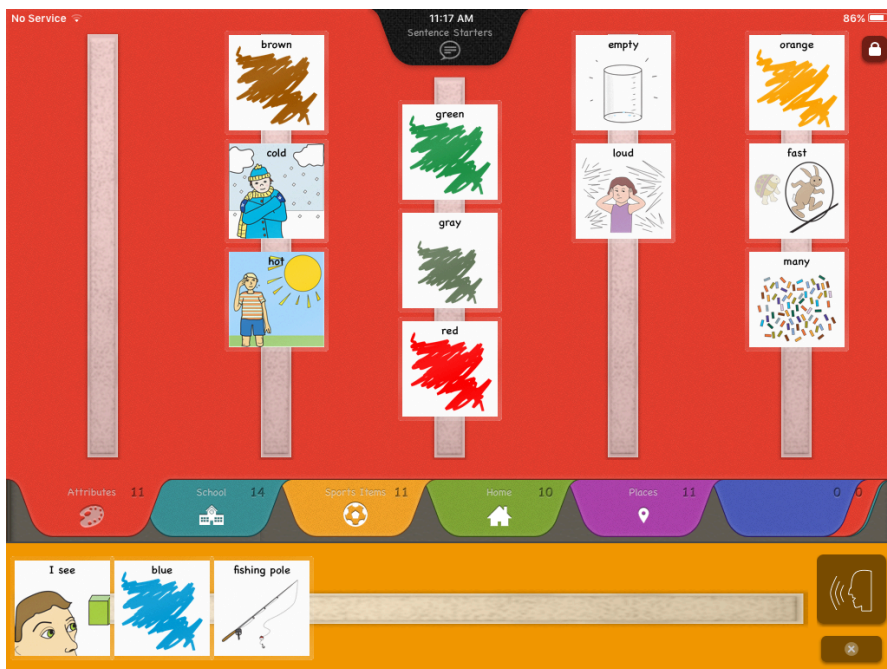
As each picture is touched or spoken on the Sentence Strip, the yellow frame highlights the picture.

Social Interaction

Within the PECS protocol, placing a picture in the hand of the Communicative Partner assures an interaction. When using an app on a tablet, tapping a picture or the **Speak** button does not assure an interaction between the user and the Communicative Partner has taken place. Therefore, if there is no evidence of an interaction, identify a behavior which guarantees that the Communicative Partner is attending to the user. These would include:

1. Tapping the Communicative Partner.
2. Bringing the tablet to the Communicative Partner before activating the **Speak** function.
3. Waiting for the Communicative Partner to approach.
4. Calling the Communicative Partner. You can create a call feature within PECSTalk by adding Communicative Partner names, etc.
5. Repeating the message if the Communicative Partner does not respond.

Error Correction

Within the PECS protocol, we use two types of error correction procedures. These procedures are described in *The Picture Exchange Communication System Training Manual, 2ⁿᵈ and 3ʳᵈ Editions*.

1. For sequential lessons such as arranging pictures in the correct order on the Sentence Strip, we use a Backstep Error Correction Procedure.
2. For discrete lessons such as choosing the correct picture to add to the Sentence Strip, we use a 4-Step Error Correction Procedure. To assess correct picture selection conduct periodic Correspondence Checks.

If your student arranges pictures in the wrong order on the Sentence Strip, PECSTalk allows an easy method for correcting this. Simply touch and drag a picture to its correct location on the Sentence Strip!