

About Pixons™, the Pixon™ Project, and the Pixon™ Project Kit

In the summer of 2007, a group of over 200 speech-language pathologists were asked the following question at a national presentation: *“How many of you have, in your school districts, a documented plan for systematically introducing core vocabulary for your students using any kind of AAC system?”*

Not a single audience member was able to say “we do” in response to that question. As a result, Semantic Compaction Systems sponsored a team of speech-language pathologists and educators to advocate for and outline curriculum guidelines for the systematic development of language with children (and adults) with complex communication needs who need to use AAC strategies. The work of this team of people became known as The Pixon™ Project.

Background Information

The Pixon™ Project identified 3 key components that needed to be embraced in order to provide these curriculum guidelines:













1. The commitment to making sure that children using AAC systems have access to **50 to 200+ permanently available, high frequency, re-usable core words**. There could be no curriculum if a child (and adult) did not have access to the words in the curriculum. How would the Pixon™ Project handle this issue?
 - ✓ The Answer: Select a set of core vocabulary words as a starter set and develop AAC systems that use these words (see point 2 and 3.) Provide guidelines and an architecture for local support teams to generate the necessary extended vocabulary.
2. The importance of providing the child (or adult) with complex communication needs with **language-friendly AAC communication systems** that promote language development and support maximum language production. Every child (and adult) needs to have an AAC system that is his/her own personal system, without regard to costs or funding issues. Plus, the system must be designed to make talking as easy as possible. How would the Pixon™ Project handle this issue?
 - ✓ The Answer: Focus on the use of simple, manual communication boards with vocabulary represented with single meaning pictures that could be used prior to the introduction of speech generating devices. Design and produce a range of manual communication boards that people can modify and use with children and adults with complex communication needs. Provide pre-selected core vocabulary, based on normal language development principles, with local teams adding personalized extended vocabulary.
3. The obligation to maintain an **open-door to the full range of AAC options available** to the child (or adult) who might eventually make a transition to use of a speech generating device as a primary, personal communication system. There are a range of AAC devices on

the market and vocabulary is represented and organized differently by different manufacturers. If the project team were to make manual communication boards with pre-selected vocabulary represented with pictures, wouldn't the selection of pictures be putting the child (or adult) on a path towards a particular device? How would the Pixon™ Project handle this issue?

- ✓ The Answer: Develop an entirely new set of SINGLE MEANING pictures, named "Pixons™." These Pixons would reflect the common metaphors used in internationally implemented English-language based AAC picture sets and systems, including the use of Minspeak systems. By introducing Pixons™ as an **initial symbol set**, the child (and adult), family, and support team gain familiarity with pictures that are VERY similar to the pictures used in Minspeak and other AAC devices.

Comparing Pixons with Minspeak Icon Sequences and Other Single Meaning Pictures

Let's take a look at 3 common words and how they are represented with Pixons, with Minspeak icon sequences, and with other single meaning pictures that you could buy (Picture Communication Symbols) or find free on the Internet.

Word	Pixons™	Minspeak Icon Sequences (from Unity84)	Picture Communication Symbols	Pictures from the Internet
eat				
hungry				
bite				

The Pixons™ use the same basic concepts or metaphors that are in other single meaning pictures. But Pixons™ also use the key icons from the Minspeak Application Program. Start your child off with Pixons™ so when he/she is ready to have a Minspeak device, he/she will already be familiar with the basic pictures that are used in a Minspeak system. The Pixons™ are stepping-stones to talking with a Minspeak device!

Pixon Products

The Pixon™ Project developed the following PRODUCTS that are part of the Pixon™ Project Kit.

1. The Pixon™ Language and Learning Activity Notebook - The Pixon™ Language and Learning Activity Notebook (The PLLAN) contains a thorough description of Pixon™ Project materials and is your PLAN for implementing these materials.

2. Pixon™ Picture Set - All of the 1800+ Pixon™ pictures are available on the Pixon™ Picture Set CD/DVD. The pictures are available as BMP pictures or a MY PIXON™ SYMBOLS file that can be imported into Boardmaker.
3. Pixon™ Manual Communication Boards – The Pixon™ Project Kit includes pre-made manual communication boards. The simplest board in the Pixon™ Project Kit has 20 locations with 25 words. The most robust laptray-style manual communication board provided has 216 locations with access to 212 words, grammar markers, and word altering strategies. A portable board provides space for over 300 words in 1 inch targets. Boards have been designed for individuals with a range of sensory and motor skills. Each board has a “main” section and additional pre-made supplemental core vocabulary and extended vocabulary displays.
4. Pixon™ Educational and Environmental Materials – The Pixon™ Project team developed a sample set of educational and environmental materials designed to help implement core vocabulary in the classroom and home.

CONTACT the Prentke Romich Company for more information on the Pixon™ Project Kit (www.prentrom.com or 1-800-262-1984).

SAMPLE OF A PIXON™ COMMUNICATION BOARD

50 Location Board – a Personal Communication Board

Attach Supplemental and/or Extended Vocabulary Here.									
I- _____	it	who	what	when	again	now	that	this	trouble
me-myself	my-mine	not-don't	come	do-does-did	ready	how	all done-finished	all gone-gone	bad
you-your	drink	eat	get	give	go	where	big	different	good
hear-listen	help	like	look-see	make	put	away	happy	little	more
say-tell	stop	take	turn	want	here	there	sad	sick	silly