Idioms!

Each week we teach the kids an idiom or phrase that means something different than the literal meaning of the words. Studies have shown that children with autism spectrum disorders have difficulty understanding non-literal language.

We covered these idioms this month!

- Whatever floats your boat
- He had smoke coming out of his ears

We encourage you to use these idioms, as well as others, at home with your child. Be sure to explain what they actually mean and provide an example of when to use them! The more contexts your child hears these phrases in the better!

Student Biography

Manal Sabri

Hi, my name is Manal. I'm a first year graduate clinician. I'm so happy to be working at ACE for the second semester. I enjoy working with all of your children.

I'm Jordanian, born and raised in Amman, Jordan. My first language is Arabic. I finished my bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems from the University of Jordan. I worked as a software engineer before I moved to Tucson with my husband 6 years ago.

I was drawn to this amazing field and decided to make a career shift. That decision was one of the best decisions I ever made. I thoroughly enjoy working with children and their families. I'm very passionate about helping children in any way possible.

I spend my free time with my 4-year old daughter. We enjoy baking together, painting, playing pretend, and being silly 😊

Have a great summer!

Upcoming Events

International Boys & Men's Choral Festival
July 20, 2014
Event Location: Tucson, AZ
Phone: 520-296-6277
The legendary Tucson Boys Chorus, "America's Singing Ambassadors," will take part in a public performance in Tucson as part of the multi-city, International Boys & Men's Choral Festival.

Loft Kids Fest
Event Location: 3233 East Speedway Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85716
Phone: 520-795-7777
Super summer excitement returns to The Loft Cinema with the eighth annual LOFT KIDS FEST! Each morning, kids and their parents can experience some of the best children's films of all time, along with fun games, and interactive activities. And best of all, it's FREE!

Twilight Thursdays: Alien Edition
July 31, 2014
Event Location: 2150 N. Alvernon Way, Tucson, AZ 85712
Phone: 520-326-9686 ext. 10
The Tucson Botanical Gardens hosts an evening with fun family activities and entertainment focused around an 'Alien Invasion: Of the Plant Kind' exhibit. Enjoy Alien-inspired crafts, food and drink options, a guided tour of the Alien Invasion exhibit and more!

“Play is the highest form of research.” ~ Albert Einstein
Media Mania

Wendy Chung is a pediatrician and geneticist who specializes in autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In this TEDtalk, she delivers a highly informative talk about what we know about the causes and genetic components of ASD. She discusses what she has learned from research, treatment, and her experiences working with families.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKlMcLTqRLs

Kathe’s Question

Dear Kathe,

My son often has a hard time thinking about how others are feeling. He only listens to their words but doesn’t read their facial expressions. How can I work with him at home to help him learn facial expressions?

Sincerely,
Mangled Mama

Dear Mangled,

As you know, having appropriate eye-contact is a difficult skill for many people on the autism spectrum. This is also true of reading facial expressions and body language.

Looking at pictures (books, magazines, billboards, newspapers, family photo albums etc.) and describing how the people’s faces look (pay close attention to the position of the eyebrows) and what they’re feeling is a good place to start. Talking about pictures, which are inanimate, and discussing them in a place and time that is comfortable for you and your child is a good starting place.

As your child becomes more familiar with “reading” facial expressions and body language in pictures, you can continue the discussion with and about real people.

Good Luck,
Kathe
For questions E-mail Kathe at kmcgrath@email.arizona.edu
What's new in research?

Teaching children with autism a basic component skill of perspective-taking
(Gould, Tarbox, O’Hora, Noone, & Bergstrom, 2011)

Perspective taking is an important skill for social communication. Children with autism usually struggle with this skill. In this study, researchers used multiple exemplars to teach children with autism to identify “what people see,” which is a basic skill of perspective taking.

The clinician showed the children in the study cards that contained a person’s face looking at an object (animal, vehicle or colors). On the card there was an arrow from the person’s eyes to the object he was looking at. As training continued the arrow that was used got smaller until it was completely gone.

The study found that training was effective in teaching children to follow a person’s gaze and identify the object that the person was looking at. However, generalization to the natural environment was limited.

In our sessions, we utilize the natural environment and emphasize the importance of looking at people’s eyes and following their gaze. One fun game that we play is for one person to hide an object in the room, and then only use his/her eyes to guide the other person to the object's location. Parents at home could play a similar game to help their children develop this skill.

What we have learned so far...

This summer was all about Perspective taking! There are so many aspects of perspective taking that we devoted an entire summer to it. Here are some of the topics we covered:

- Different opinions are okay – we talked about how everyone has different opinions and how it’s okay to disagree sometimes.
- Saying no in a polite way – we learned that when we don’t agree, it’s okay to say no as long as you say no politely.
- Facial expressions can tell us about someone’s perspective about something – our eyes, mouths, and eyebrows tell other people about how we’re feeling. We can tell how our friends and family are feeling by looking at their facial expressions.

Worthy Websites

www.disabilityscoop.com
Sign up to receive newsletters from the Disability Scoop to get the most current updates on developmental disabilities. The Disability Scoop also provides breaking news about disabilities in the media. There is an entire tab devoted to autism in which you can find research article summaries, autism in the media, and applications to use with children with autism.

www.autismweb.com
AutismWeb is a website devoted to autism teaching strategies. The website is managed by parents of children with autism, so it's a great way to gain insight into other parent’s experiences. Parents are also able to share their stories and give updates on their child’s progress. There are even great recipes for picky eaters!

Important Information

If you need to miss a session, or will be late, please call (520) 621-7070. This number will connect you to the front office at the UA Grunewald-Blitz Clinics. They will let us know via email.

If you don’t call ahead, it’s hard for us to plan our sessions. We strive to make each session fun as well as therapeutic, and it’s easiest to do that when we know who will be there. In addition, if you don’t call to cancel, you will be charged a “no-show” fee.