Winter is here with holiday cheer!

“I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.” - Jimmy Dean

Idioms!

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

Here are the idioms that we have covered this month:

- On the same page
- The tip of the iceberg
- Copycat

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

Student Biography

Alana Baxter

Hello! My name is Alana, and I am a first year graduate clinician. I learned so much at ACE this fall. It was a pleasure to meet and work with so many fun and unique people.

I am from Seattle, WA, and completed my Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Spanish and a minor in linguistics at Lawrence University in Appleton, WI, before teaching English in a high school in Japan for two years. I have never lived somewhere warm, so I am constantly surprised by life in the desert!

When not in school or clinic, I enjoy singing, dancing, photography, observing animals, learning foreign languages, voice acting and watching science fiction shows.

Upcoming Events:

November 25th - January 4th
Wee Winter Wonderland
Location: 4445 E Camp Lowell
The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures showcases more than 300 antique and contemporary miniature exhibits.

November 29th – January 1st
Old Tucson Old Time Holidays
Location: Old Tucson
The Old Time Holidays celebration is a festive atmosphere with holiday music, Santa’s arrival by a wagon and lots more. If you bring a donation for the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona you can save on admission fees.

December 12th to 14th
4th Avenue Winter Street Fair
Location: 4th Avenue (from University to 9th Street)
The 4th Avenue street fair has over 400+ arts and crafts booths, 35+ food vendors, a main stage for performances, street musicians and performers, and lots more. This is one of Tucson’s largest arts venues and is a wonderful place to take the family.

December 20th, 6:30pm
Parade of Lights & Holiday Festival
Location: 17th Street/Stone Ave.
The Downtown Tucson Partnership presents the 20th annual Parade of Lights. The parade includes themed floats, vehicles, entertainers and, of course, a visit from Santa Claus!
Media Mania

Rosie King is a smart, creative, determined 16 year old girl. A self-proclaimed activist, Rosie is hoping to change the way the world thinks about people with autism. In a recent TED Talk entitled “How Autism Freed Me to be Myself,” Rosie describes how her autism makes her unique. She challenges others to consider the true definition of “normal” in this funny and stirring short video.

TED Talk:
https://www.ted.com/talks/rosie_king/how_autism_freed_me_to_be_myself

Rosie also hosted a BBC documentary at the age of 13 called “My Autism and Me.” In this 15 minute special feature, she explains what it is like to grow up with autism, and introduces the lives of several other children with autism.

“My Austism and Me”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejpWWP1HNGQ

Clinician’s Corner

Dear Kathe,

When my child meets someone new she doesn’t ask any questions to get to know them. How can I encourage her to get to know her friends?

Sincerely,
Social Butterfly

Dear Social,

This is a hard thing for folks with social communication (pragmatic) difficulties to do. Model asking questions about other people at home (characters on TV, relatives (close or distant), book characters) that your child might ask of friends. “What does he like to eat? What movies has she seen?” then ask a follow up question to the answer given. (In group we have a printed out list of “wh-“ questions that we have available to help our group members think of questions to ask.) Practice these skills with your child and model (then discuss) how you get to know your friends better. Explain that asking questions and thinking about the other person’s perspective is how we show our interest in becoming friends with another person.

Good Luck,
Kathe

Worthy Websites

Autism Highway http://autismhwy.com
This website is an “informative friendship network” where individuals and families can find information about ASD and connect with other people in the autism community. The website also provides links to recent articles, a blog, and online forum.

Awe in Autism http://www.aweinautism.org/
Awe in Autism is dedicated to providing inspiration and encouragement to those in the ASD community. It features a gallery of original works of art, music, literature, poetry, photography, and video that is either created or inspired by individuals with autism.
What’s New in Research?


There is a lack in the research literature of first-hand accounts of children’s’ experiences of autism. This article describes the process and results of interviewing 12 children with autism from ages 4 to 13 about their sensory experiences.

Contrary to previous literature, the children often compared their life experiences to other people or “normal.” They described likes and dislikes not due to specific qualities of the item, but as a holistic experience. They often used storytelling to describe an example of their experience of a sensation or how their reaction to a sensation has changed over time.

This study showed that children of a variety of ages and severity ratings could convey their experiences and lend their voices to the research and understanding of autism.

What we have learned so far....

- This month, a main focus of our group sessions was how seeing can lead to knowing. If two people see the same thing and are thinking about the same thing, they can talk about it. Communication can break down when one person does not see or understand what the other person is talking about.

- People with autism often have difficulty understanding that other people do not see or think about things the same way that they do. During group, we did several activities to demonstrate how difficult it is to talk about things when one person does not know what the topic is. We also talked about ways to support conversation to prevent communication breakdowns, such as directly asking the other person what they are talking about to make sure you are ‘on the same page.’

- In the remaining few weeks, we discussed techniques that we can use to make sure that we are acting expectedly in unfamiliar situations. These including watching, listening, and imitating the behaviors of others.

- As part of an ongoing goal for the semester, we continued to practice initiating conversations with others, as well as keeping a conversation going.

We encourage you to continue working on these skills with your child over the holiday break!

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 Clinic. They will let us know via email.

If you don’t call ahead, it is 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.

If addition, if you do not call to cancel, you will be charged a “no-show” fee.

ACE Team
Fall 2014

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