Spring into 2015 with ACE!

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress.”
–Frederick Douglass

Student Biography
Libby Coon

Hi, my name is Libby and I am one of the student clinicians at ACE. It has been a pleasure getting to know you and your children these past few weeks and I wanted to share a little about myself.

I was born and raised in Tucson near the UA. I got my undergraduate degree in Latin American Studies at Scripps College in Claremont, California. Since then, I have lived and worked in various countries in Central and South America. I met my husband in Brazil and we have had three weddings to include all of our family and friends!

My husband and I enjoy watching movies together and traveling. We both like soccer and were fortunate to have the opportunity to go to the World Cup this past summer in Brazil.

I am excited to be back in Tucson and at the UA. I look forward to an exciting semester of growth!

Upcoming Events:

Tombstone Western Music Festival
3/7-3/8: Fremont Street, Tombstone, AZ 85638

Walk Pow Pow (annual gathering of southern Arizona’s Tohono O’odham featuring dancing and contests)

Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival

Tucson Cine Mexico (Mexican-made cinema film festival)

Chalk Art Festival

Civil War in the Southwest (reenactment)
3/21 - 3/22: 15520 Picacho Peak Road, Picacho, AZ 85141 (see website for prices)

Southwest Indian Art Fair
Media Mania

“How Robots are Helping Children with Autism” was an article published in The Guardian on February 1, 2015. The article describes a very special robot named Zeno, designed to assist with both early diagnosis and treatment of autism. Because Zeno is similar to humans, communicating both verbally and with gestures and facial expressions, but not quite human himself, children with autism have found interaction with the robot less stressful than human interaction. Zeno can also calculate kids’ reaction times to help therapists and parents gain better understanding of children’s communication abilities. A similar robot named Milo has been used in classrooms where children who have never spoken to an adult teacher suddenly communicated with the robot. The developers of Zeno and Milo hope the robots will play an important and helpful role in the lives of many children.

Read more at:

Clinician’s Corner

Dear Kathe,

How can I give my child opportunities to use the skills they are learning in group with unfamiliar people in their everyday life? How can I capitalize on these situations to make them learning experiences?

- Thinking outside the box

Dear Thinking,

The great thing about life is that we live it every day! The skills that are learned in group are very applicable to everyday social situations. Probably the best way to help your child put the concepts/skills that are taught in group into daily life is practicing them often. Start in a small group or one on one situation where the person (someone familiar) your child is interacting with is aware of the concept or skill that your child is working on. After your child is able to complete the skill, move on to a controlled situation with an unfamiliar person and be ready to cue your child as needed. After practicing and learning the skill in this kind of a situation, your child will probably be ready to do it on his or her own. The more you talk to your child, the more they will be aware of how their actions affect those around them which will reinforce the skills they learn in group.

Good Luck,

Kathe

Worthy Websites

http://www.autismontheseas.com
Autism on the Seas is a website devoted to providing assistance for vacation cruises for families of children with developmental disabilities. The organization works with a number of different popular cruise lines, such as Royal Caribbean, to travel with you or just help you plan your trip!

http://as-az.org
The Autism Society of Southern Arizona is a local organization that provides tips for everyday life with autism and more. They also host an annual Piece the Puzzle Autism walk, which you can register for on their website. The upcoming walk will take place April 11, 2015.
What’s New in Research?

Power Cards are visual aids that can be used with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to teach appropriate behaviors in a variety of situations. Power Cards have a picture of a character that the child likes on one side and a short social story on the other to remind children how to act in specific situations. We use social stories in group to demonstrate to students what behaviors are expected and unexpected.

In an article from October 2014, researchers analyzed the use of Power Cards with children with ASD while playing games. They reported that the Power Cards helped children start playing and take turns. However, Power Cards did not help the children comment about the game while playing. Power Cards can be used at school or home to teach appropriate behaviors.

An example of a social story for turn taking while playing Topple is:
Donatello says once you place the number of Topple pieces on the pyramid that the dice say, tell your friend “your turn.”


What we have learned so far....

These past few weeks, we have worked hard to get to know our new group members, clinicians and students alike. Through the concrete example of getting to know each other with “social files,” we have learned that we can store information about our friends’ likes and dislikes and use that information when we talk to them.

As a group, we have brainstormed what our rules for the sessions will be, which are also good to keep in mind when conversing with others. For example, we want to “listen with our eyes” by looking at those who are talking to us and paying attention to what they are saying. Additional rules include keeping conversations balanced by letting everyone talk, and maintaining “body in group” by keeping our bodies and minds focused on group conversation.

In order to put what we’ve learned into action, we went on a trip to the Tucson Gem Show together and interacted with vendors at the show and other group members outside of the clinic. To prepare for this activity, we role-played what it might be like to talk with one of the vendors at the show. We look forward to taking more trips like these!

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

*WOW (where some ACE sessions are held) is a nut-free environment!