

Ready to Succeed

An Early Literacy and School Readiness Newsletter for Professionals

The Eyes Tell a Story in Autism

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MIND Institute researchers have discovered an important clue to why children with autism spectrum disorders have trouble imitating others: They spend less time looking at the faces of people who are modeling new skills.



The researchers conducted their study using eye-tracking headgear and software to measure with precision the point at which a child is looking when learning a task. An actor demonstrated the task, and test subjects watched on a computer.

"We found that the children with autism focused on the

demonstrator's action and looked at the demonstrator's face much less often than did typically developing children," said Giacomo Vivanti, a postdoctoral researcher and the study's lead author.

"The typically developing children may be looking at the demonstrator's face to check for information on what to do or how to respond appropriately, information that the children with autism are less inclined to seek.

"This is an important finding, because children with autism have difficulty learning from others. This might be one key to why that is so."

Imitation plays an

important role in how children learn, as well as in how people interact socially, said MIND Institute researcher and senior study author Sally J. Rogers, who has been studying imitation impairment and autism for more than 20 years. "This is a trait we see as early as we can diagnose autism, and it's one of the traits that is present even in mildly impaired adults," she said.

Impaired imitation leads to additional impairments in sharing emotions, pretend play, pragmatic communication and understanding the emotional states of others. For years, scientists thought that

children with autism and related disorders had trouble with learning through



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Ready to Succeed aims to assist everyone involved with the development of young children to value and embrace their role in fostering early literacy and school readiness.

The Eyes Tell a Story *continued*

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imitation because they had poor motor skills or because they did not pay attention to the action being performed. The new study rules out these hypotheses.

"We now understand more about how this imitation deficit might be working and, after more study, we may actually be able to address it

in a way that helps children with autism develop a more natural set of behaviors," said Rogers, a UC Davis professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences.

The study appeared online in June



and is scheduled to appear in print in November in the *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*.

Phyllis Brown is a senior public information officer for the UC Davis Health System.

Dateline UC Davis. October 17, 2008.

<http://www.dateline.ucdavis.edu/detail.lasso?id=10771&fu=101708>

Homemade Applesauce

The apple is one of the oldest and most versatile fruits. A medium apple contains only 81 calories, almost no fat or sodium, and is an excellent source of fiber. Over 7,000 varieties of apples have been identified, however most consumers are only familiar with a half dozen or so varieties. Farmers' Markets often market many of the less familiar varieties. Placer County's climate is ideal for growing premium apples.



Apple varieties available locally include: *Gravenstein, Golden Delicious, King, Jonathan, Stayman Winesap, Red Rome Beauty, Mutsu, Pippin, Arkansas Black, Granny Smith, Red Delicious, Empire, Fuji, McIntosh, and Gala*. Varieties best for cooking include *Jonathan, Golden Delicious, Gravenstein, Granny Smith, Rome Beauty, Stayman Winesap, and Pippin*.

Purchasing locally grown produce

is not only one way to be sure you are getting the freshest fruit, but it also helps Placer County's farmers. So, be sure to shop for locally grown apples for use in this recipe.

Read either *Apples Apples Apples* by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace or *Up, Up, Up! It's Apple Picking Time* by Jody Fickes Shapiro with the children. Extend the story by making crock pot applesauce to serve for morning or afternoon snack. A day that is a little chilly would be perfect!

WHAT YOU NEED:

8 apples
½ teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 cinnamon stick
1-2 tablespoons of sugar (optional)
table knives and cutting board
measuring spoon
lemon squeezer
crock pot
potato masher
spoon for stirring and large bowl

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Peel and cut the apples into six

- pieces. Be sure to remove the seeds.
- Put the apples in the crock pot.
- Squeeze the lemon and add ½ teaspoon of the juice to the apples.
- Place the cinnamon stick in the apples and stir.
- Set the crock pot on low. Cover and cook for 4-6 hours.
- When the apples are done cooking, pour them into a bowl. Remove and throw away the cinnamon stick.
- Using a potato masher, mash the apples until they are the consistency you desire.
- If you wish, add 1-2 tablespoons sugar to taste.
- Serve warm with low fat vanilla wafers.

Serving freshly made applesauce is an excellent way to ensure that children are getting some of their recommended 1-1½ cups of fruit in their diet every day.



Cozy Up With a Good Book!

FAMILY

Featured Title: **Snow Family**

by Daniel Kirk

On a beautiful winter day, a group of mischievous snow children watch as a family builds a snow child that comes to life. The pictures are large and colorful. The faces are expressive, and the close-ups of the father and mother kissing their son are especially captivating. The combination of rhyming verse and pictures of snow-filled landscapes and a cast of characters with coal eyes and carrot noses make this an entertaining read-aloud.

All Kinds of Families
Norma Simon

Aunt Claire's Yellow Beehive Hair
Mary GrandPre

Brothers and Sisters
Ellen B. Senisi

Bunny Cakes
Rosemary Wells

Clifford's Family
Norman Bridwell

The Family Under the Moon
Nancy Jewell

Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers
Mary Ann Hoberman

I Love My Family
Wade Hudson

The Little Brute Family
Russell Hoban

Me and My Family Tree
Joan Sweeney

One Hundred is a Family
Pam Munoz Ryan

Who's in a Family
Robert Skutch

Families Are Forever
Craig Shemin

WINTER

Featured Title: **One Winter's Day**

by M. Christina Butler

When Little Hedgehog's nest blows away in a snowstorm, he retrieves his hat, scarf, and mittens and makes his way to his friend Badger's house. Along the way, he meets shivering field mice, an otter, and a doe and fawn. He generously passes along his garments to these creatures and weathers the storm, safe and warm, with Badger. When the skies clear, they make their way to the spot where Little Hedgehog's nest used to be and find a newly rebuilt, cozy house decorated with his winter accessories.

It's Winter
Linda Glaser

Animals in Winter
Henrietta Bancroft

The First Day of Winter
Denise Fleming

Winter's Gift
Jane Monroe Donovan

Winter is the Warmest Season
Lauren Stringer

When Winter Comes
Nancy Van Laan

Snow Balls
Lois Ehlert

Winter
Nuria Roca

Winter Friends
Carl R. Sams

The Twelve Days of Winter
Deborah Lee Rose

Time to Sleep
Denise Fleming

Winter in White
Robert Sabuda

SHARING and GIVING

Featured Title: **The Giving Chair**

by Yoshiko Kouyama

If you saw a chair by the road with a sign that read 'Help yourself', what would you do? A donkey finds such a chair and rests his acorn-filled basket on it, then goes away to take a nap. A bear comes along, thinks the acorns are being offered to him, eats heartily, and leaves a jar of honey. Each passer-by makes a similar decision, taking what they think is being offered. But they all leave something behind as well, reminding us about giving and receiving, and the good feelings in random acts of kindness

The Doorbell Rang
Pat Hutchins

Sharing is Fun
Joanna Cole

Sharing: How Kindness Grows
Fran Shaw

I Am Sharing
Mercer Mayer

Share and Take Turns
Cheri J. Meiners

Let's Share
P.K. Hallinan

Giving Thanks
Jonathan London

I Can Share
Karen Katz



Poems and a Song

MITTEN WEATHER

Author unknown

Thumbs in the thumb place,
Fingers all together,
This is the poem we say
In mitten weather.
Doesn't matter weather
They're made of wool or leather.
Thumbs in the thumb place,
Fingers all together,
This is the poem we say
In mitten weather.



FAMILY FUN

Author unknown

Mommy and me dance and sing.
Daddy and me laugh and play.
Mommy, Daddy, and me
Dance and sing,
Laugh and play,
Kiss and hug,
A zillion times a day!

MOMMY TOLD ME

Author unknown

My mommy told me to tell you
To clap your hands
Just like I do (clap your hands)
My mommy told me to tell you

To nod your head
Just like I do (nod your head)

Continue with:

Tap your toes
Hop on one foot
Blow a kiss

MY FAMILY

Sung to: *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*
By: Paula R. Westernen

Look around and you will see
Our special, special family
All of us are proud to be
A happy part of our family tree
Love and kindness; care and trust
I love our family very much!

Developing Language Skills

Children need many opportunities to hear language in order to develop their language skills. Here are some suggested ways to encourage talking in two to four year olds:

- Use good speech that is clear and simple for children to model.
- Repeat what the child says indicating that you understand. Build and expand on what she said. "Want juice? I have juice. I have apple juice. Do you want apple juice?"
- Use baby talk only if needed to convey the message and when accompanied by the adult word. "Yes, it is time for sa-sa. We will have snack now."
- Make a scrapbook of favorite or familiar things by cutting out pictures. Group them into

categories, such as things to ride on, things to eat, things for dessert, fruits, things to play with. Create nonsense pictures by mixing and matching pictures. Glue a picture of a horse eating at a table. Talk about what is wrong with the picture and ways to "fix" it. Count the items you have pictured in the scrapbook.

- Help children understand and ask questions. Play the yes-no game. Ask questions such as "Are you a girl?" "Are you Tracy?" "Can a cow fly?" Encourage children to make up questions and try to fool you.
- Ask questions that require a choice. "Do you want an apple or an orange?" "Do you want to play with the car or the truck?"

- Expand vocabulary. Name body parts, and identify what you do with them. "This is my nose. I can smell flowers, cookies, popcorn, and soap."
- Sing simple songs and recite nursery rhymes to show the rhythm and pattern of speech.
- Place familiar objects in a container. Have a child remove the object and tell you



what it is called and how to use it. "This is my ball. I bounce it. I play with it."

- Use photographs of familiar people and places, and retell what happened or make up a new story.

First 5 Newsletter Evaluation

To prepare our required reports for First 5 Placer County, we have an evaluation for you to complete. Our goal is to make our newsletter educational, informative, and useful. Your opinions are important to us, so we appreciate you taking the time to answer honestly. Please return your completed survey to the UCCE office or submit your answers online by visiting the **Ready to Succeed** web pages (<http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu>) by **January 5, 2009**. We appreciate your support! *Submit your evaluation and get details on receiving a prize! Be the first and get a bonus prize!*

Did you complete and submit the previous newsletter evaluation?

- Yes No

1. To what extent do you read the newsletter? (Check One)

- Usually read all of it Usually read most of it
 Read about half Scan or read some
 Usually don't read it

2. To what extent do you do the suggested activities with the children in your program? (Check One)

- Try to do all of them Usually do most of them
 Do about one half of activities Have done some, occasionally
 Don't usually do the activities Not applicable

3. Do you share the newsletter with other adults? (If yes, please write the **number** on the line provided.)

- Yes No
 _____ Spouse _____ Neighbor _____ Friend
 _____ Other teacher(s) _____ Program parents _____ Other (specify):

5. Do you keep the newsletters to refer to at a later time? Yes No

6. How are you using these newsletters? (Check all that apply)

- As reference To confirm conclusions To guide practice
 As conversation starters To evaluate child To inform decisions
 As activity resources To instruct parents/others
 Other (specify): _____

7. Please rate the newsletter on the following:

	Excellent		Neutral		Poor
Relevance of articles to you	5	4	3	2	1
Usefulness of information	5	4	3	2	1
Usefulness of activities	5	4	3	2	1
Usefulness of teaching techniques	5	4	3	2	1

8. On a scale of 1-5, has the information in the newsletter increased your knowledge of early literacy development?

Yes	Neutral			No
5	4	3	2	1

9. Also on a scale of 1-5, do you feel you are better able to support children in their early literacy development with the information contained in the newsletter?

Yes	Neutral			No
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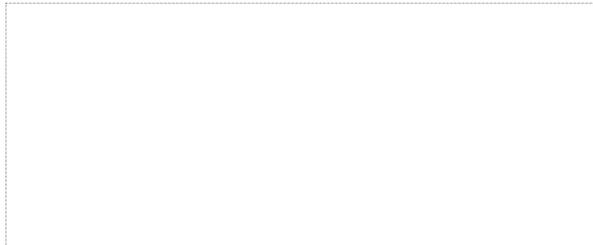
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 Newsletter for
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First 5 Evaluation *continued*

5 4 3 2 1

10. Briefly describe any way the information in the newsletter has caused you to enhance or modify your teaching or early literacy practices?

11. What changes or additions would you suggest for the newsletter:

12. Additional Comments:

Thank you for once again taking the time to complete our survey! Your responses help us evaluate the information we provide and prepare the reports required for First 5 Placer County. Please return this in the

Sharon K. Junge

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Program Representative II

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