

Study: Shakespeare Play Helps Children with Autism Communicate

Researchers say social interaction, language and facial expression skills improve

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

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NEWS PACKAGE



SUGGESTED TEASE	STILL TO COME, HOW SHAKESPEARE IS CHANGING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM. THE RESULTS OF A FASCINATING NEW STUDY, NEXT IN HEALTH NEWS.
ANCHOR LEAD	IN AN EFFORT TO HELP CHILDREN WITH AUTISM COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY, RESEARCHERS ARE TURNING TO AN UNLIKELY FIGURE.
(PACKAGE START) -----	THEY'RE PUTTING SHAKESPEARE CENTER STAGE IN A NOVEL APPROACH TO GROUP THERAPY - AND AS CLARK POWELL SHOWS US, A NEW STUDY LOOKING INTO THE APPROACH IS GETTING RAVE REVIEWS.
CG: Courtesy: The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center	(Nats - Chase taking dog outside) :02
Shots of Chase letting dog out	FOR MOST OF US, LETTING OUT THE FAMILY DOG IS ROUTINE. BUT FOR 10-YEAR-OLD CHASE DAVIS, WHO HAS AUTISM, THIS IS A BREAKTHROUGH. :07
CG: Heather Davis Son has autism	<i>"He is terrified of dogs in general, and he's been more apt to go and help with the dog or even just help with the household chores in general." :09</i>
Shot of Chase with dog	WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE FOR CHASE WASN'T JUST THERAPY OR MEDICATION - IT WAS A SERIES OF ACTING CLASSES CENTERED ON SHAKESPEARE. :07
CG: Courtesy: Big Ten Network----	
Shots of Shakespeare class	<i>"After 10 weeks, the kids that had autism who participated showed significant improvement in their social skills." :11</i>
CG: Marc Tassé, PhD Ohio State Nisonger Center	
Shots of researchers in office	DOCTOR MARC TASSÉ (TAH -say) IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE NISONGER CENTER AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER. IN A NEW STUDY, HE AND HIS TEAM STAGED AN

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<p>Shots of Shakespeare class</p> <p>Photo of Kelly Hunter</p> <p>Shots of kids in class</p> <p>Graphic - (curtain goes up) -Better language skills -More social interaction -Recognition of facial expressions</p> <p>Marc Tassé (CG'd earlier)</p> <p>CG: Maggie Mehling Research Coordinator</p> <p>Shots of family playing game</p> <p>Heather Davis (CG'd earlier)</p> <p>Kids on stage in class (PACKAGE END) -----</p> <p>ANCHOR TAG</p>	<p>INTERVENTION USING WHAT'S KNOWN AS THE HUNTER HEARTBEAT METHOD.</p> <p>IT'S A DRAMA-BASED INTERVENTION DEVELOPED BY BRITISH ACTRESS KELLY HUNTER - THAT USES THE RHYTHM AND REPETITION OF LINES FROM SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYS.</p> <p>THE RESULT IS BETTER LANGUAGE SKILLS, MORE SOCIAL INTERACTION AND FOR SOME RECOGNITION OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS - WHICH IS OFTEN A CHALLENGE FOR THOSE WITH AUTISM. :26</p> <p><i>"They're taught these core skills in a very relaxed, playful environment, in which it's almost like they're not aware that they're being taught." :09</i></p> <p><i>"It just blows me away everytime I see it how the kids are able to really just exceed all expectations with their ability to get engaged." :09</i></p> <p>LIKE MANY PARENTS, HEATHER SAYS SHE WAS SKEPTICAL. BUT SINCE HER SON FIRST TOOK THE STAGE, SHE'S NOTICED A DIFFERENCE. :07</p> <p><i>"It was watching a completely different child for those few moments. And he loved it, he absolutely found pure joy in it." :09</i></p> <p>AT OHIO STATE WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER, THIS IS CLARK POWELL REPORTING. :03</p> <hr/> <p>IN ALL, THE STUDY INCLUDED 14 CHILDREN WITH AUTISM. LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SKILLS WERE EVALUATED BY INDEPENDENT RESEARCHERS WHO TESTED STUDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER THE 10-WEEK INTERVENTION.</p>
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SOCIAL MEDIA

<p> Share it! Suggested tweet:</p> <p> Suggested post:</p>	<p>Shakespeare is taking center stage during autism intervention @NisongerCenter at Ohio State. Details: bit.ly/2cprJt5</p> <p>Shakespeare is taking center stage for children with autism in a novel approach to group therapy. Researchers at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center Nisonger Center put more than a dozen children through an acting course with Shakespearean actors and saw significant improvements in language and socialization skills. See how the approach works: bit.ly/2cprJt5.</p>
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EXTRA BITES

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CG: Marc Tassé, PhD
Ohio State Nisonger Center

Tassé talks about the Hunter Heartbeat Method:
“The games start with a heartbeat, and so there's this heartbeat where the children pound their chest and start by saying hello. And that's the way every session starts, and the way every session ends. And those are core elements because it really helps kids with autism transition in and out of the intervention.”

Tassé talks about the works of Shakespeare they used:
“A lot of the games that were developed were based on Shakespeare plays and one of the games - or the intervention that we used - was mainly based on the play The Tempest.”

Tassé talks about the skills they wanted to help develop:
“Some of these core features that we were most interested in were things like social skills, relationship building, eye contact, communication and language, as well as their ability to recognize emotion through different facial expressions.”

Tassé explains how evaluators calculated results in the study:
“These evaluators did not know what the intervention was or what the purpose of the study was. And they did the assessment of the kids before they participated, and then at the end of the ten weeks.”

CG: Maggie Mehling
Research Coordinator

Mehling talks about why this approach appeals to children:
“Kids with autism are kids and so they're going to -- something that's fun and enjoyable for them is going to resonate.”

Mehling describes how one child in the class opened up:
“About half way through the class we got her to sit up in the circle and her whole face just lit up having the opportunity to be up in the group and play with the actors.”

Mehling talks about the opportunities the class provides to kids:
“You interact with someone, you enjoy yourself and that intrinsic reinforcement of socializing -- kids with autism don't always get to experience that.”

CG: Heather Davis
Son has autism

Davis says her son responds best to playful therapy:
“If he thinks it's more of a game, versus, oh my gosh this is something I have to get up and do this is hard, I think it's a lot easier for him to look at it as play.”

Davis shares what she hopes her son gets from the class:
“Hopefully lose some of that negativity about wanting to do things and maybe more so, ‘Hey I can do this, I've

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done this and I can do it on my own without the help of someone else.”

References

¹*Shakespeare and autism: An exploratory evaluation of the Hunter Heartbeat Method*, September, 2016. Online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23297018.2016.1207202>.

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