Lab Update

We miss seeing our junior scientists and are looking forward to when we can see you in person in the lab again safely! In the meantime, please feel free to participate in some of the online studies we’re working on with researchers from the University of Arizona!

We are currently recruiting families of children for virtual studies!

Click here to sign up for a study with 10-24 month olds.

And send an email here: megan@arizona.edu for a virtual study with 4-5 year olds.

Finally, click here for other studies in for any age group (including for parents!)

Research Update:

The junior scientists in our lab have helped us discover how children learn new words. Sara Benham and Lisa Goffman published an article in the Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research showing that children with DLD have difficulty in learning the sounds in new words (for the word “bofi” a child may say “fofi” and “dosi”), Pairing the new word with a meaningful object helps children say them more consistently, though maybe not more accurately. These results are important for diagnosing children with DLD and for deciding when to practice new sounds and words. Thank you, junior scientists!

DLD Info Corner

Spotlight: DLD Prevalence

- Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) involves difficulties understanding and/or producing language.
- 7% of preschoolers have DLD.
- DLD is 5-7x more common than autism!
- Many children go undiagnosed and don’t receive services.

DLDandMe is a great resource for learning more about DLD.

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“Thought is the blossom; language the bud; action the fruit behind it.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson
Language Building Activities

“Take a nature walk

- Do a bug or animal hunt around your neighborhood.
- Take pictures or make a quick sketch of the animals you find.
- When you come home, you can talk about what you saw using your pictures.
- Model use of descriptive terms: How big? What color? What special parts are there?
- You can also talk about where you saw each one using location words: at a neighbor’s house, up in the sky, on a tree
- Expand this by also discussing what the animal was doing when you saw it: digging a hole, hiding from you, flying, building a nest—You can introduce new action words, and give your child a chance to practice them!

“ ‘The birds are flying through the clouds!’ would be a great sentence to use with a preschooler while watching these birds.

For children under two years old, you could try, “The birds are flying! Birds fly!”

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Play the outdoor listening game

- Head outside and close your eyes
- Listen for sounds that you may not otherwise notice, and talk about what you hear!

- This is especially fun in the mornings when birds are often singing.
- You can talk about birds, people’s voices, cars moving, leaves rustling in the wind.
- Practice imitating sounds—which is a great way to introduce some no-rules vocal play with a child who has limited vocabulary!

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Book Recommendations

- The Very Hungry Caterpillar (library)
- My Garden (library)
- The UnBrella (library)
- Pete the Cat: Five Little Ducks (library)
- Who Likes Rain? (library)
- A New Beginning: Celebrating the Spring Equinox (library)
Printable Activity: A Spring Coloring Page

- Some ideas for what you can talk about while coloring:
  - Talk about what the birds are doing (eating, drinking, sitting on the container, flying, resting)
  - Talk about the flowers (growing, turning toward the sun, bending)
  - Talk about the colors you’ll use to fill in the picture
  - Ask your child to think about what will happen next after the birds are all done eating (Will they fly away? Will they take a nap?)