

Theatre for ASD Resources

Nikki Bettcher Erickson:

320-262-9170 nikkibettcher@hotmail.com

www.nikkibettchererickson.com

ARTRAN (Applied Theatre Research and Autism Network):

www.autismtheatre.org (go to site to become a member)

Half Bakery:

www.halfbakery.com

A theatre company, normal in every respect other than that the entire performing staff are Autistic to such an extent that they are unable to interpret gestures and facial expressions automatically.

Acting Antics - A Theatrical Approach to Teaching Social Understanding:

A wonderful book written by Cindy B. Schneider. Approximately \$20.00

www.amazon.com

Autism Resources

The Resource Center Program:

www.westcentralindustries.com - offering support/networking groups for Autism, ADHD/ADD, Mental Health, TBI and Downs Syndrome.

Autism Support Group contact - Nikki Bettcher Erickson

nikkibettcher@hotmail.com, 320-235-5310

The Autism Society of America:

www.autism-society.org

The Autism Society of Minnesota:

www.ausm.org

The Minnesota Autism Center:

www.mnautism.org

The Autism Collaboration:

www.autism.org This site has links to most national Autism sites.

How Autism Spectrum Disorders and Theatre/performance fit together:

From www.autismtheatre.org:

THEATRE ASPECTS

ASD DEFICITS

Body Awareness	marked impairments in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body posture, and gestures to regulate social interaction
Emotional Expression	a lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interest or achievements with other people
Emotional Recognition	lack of social or emotional reciprocity
Empathy	failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
Group Dynamics	failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level

How Can Theatre be Applied to Help Individuals with ASD?

Parents, professionals, and researchers are always searching for new ways to help individuals with ASD, and there is a growing interest in using theatre to do so. Theatre activities can be used to teach emotion recognition, emotion expression, non-verbal behaviors and gestures, listening skills, eye contact, conversation skills, strategies to handle social situations, and several other critical social skills. Practitioners and parents are using masks to promote eye-contact and social skills, creating exercises to train individuals to refine observation skills, teaching body awareness through movement, building friendships through performance projects, etc. Particular features of theatre-based strategies make them especially useful when working with individuals with ASD:

- The theatre is a safe place for individuals to try new things/make mistakes
- Theatre is inherently fun and motivating
- Theatre is highly STRUCTURED (an actor has prescribed lines and actions)
- Theatre strategies are usually inexpensive (just need an idea, space, and time)
- Theatre activities allow for repeated practice of specific skills

RESULTS:

Social Health, Mental Health, Self-Esteem, Family togetherness, Empathy

	BEFORE PROJECT	AFTER PROJECT
1) I feel like I like myself.	100%	100%
2) I am a happy person.	95%	95%
3) I enjoy being around others.	95%	95%
4) I am confident in my abilities.	90%	100%
5) I have a wide variety of interests.	75%	85%
<i>6) I have fun every day.</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>85%</i>
7) I feel like I am well-liked by others.	70%	90%
8) I feel like I have a lot of friends.	60%	65%
9) I feel like I am part of a group.	70%	75%
10) I have a lot of energy.	65%	90%
11) I understand other people.	65%	75%
12) I make good, moral choices.	80%	85%
13) I like following the rules and feel like I am a good person.	75%	90%
14) I feel I am an interesting person and I do my best in school.	95%	95%
15) I feel proud of my accomplishments.	100%	100%
<i>16) I feel like I am a smart person.</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>90%</i>
17) I feel excited on my way to social gatherings.	80%	95%
18) I give other people compliments.	70%	100%
19) I like the way I look.	80%	100%
20) I love my family and I get along with them well.	95%	100%
TOTAL	82.5%	90.5%
DIFFERENCE =		8% up