Canadian neuroscientists release unique app to support kids' social communication skills

Big Break: The Acting Game available for iPad in App Store in time for April's Autism Awareness Month

TORONTO, APRIL 3, 2017: Emote Play Apps Inc. releases *Big Break*, an educational game to support social communication skills in children and teens. Designed by neuroscientists, the game provides a fun way to practice imitation through movie acting and singing. All young people can benefit from the game but it is expected to be especially useful for people with autism spectrum disorder, communication disorders, and attention deficit disorder subtypes.

The official launch event will be held on Friday April 21st during Autism Awareness Month. Details here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/big-break-the-acting-game-official-launch-tickets-33366283452

"Research suggests that imitation plays an important role in the development of social skills. Our studies in the SMART Lab suggest that practice with imitation can lead to improvements in communication and social responsiveness." Frank Russo, PhD, Co-Founder of Emote Play Apps and Director of the SMART Lab at Ryerson University.

Big Break is the only education app for social communication that provides scoring on imitation accuracy. Research involving various populations suggests that practice with imitation supports social communication. Other features of game play include modules requiring classification of emotion and practice with scaling the intensity of emotion.

"Neuroplasticity research suggests that regular practice and personalized feedback are important determinants of successful learning," said Lucy McGarry, PhD, Co-Founder of Emote Play Apps and alumna of the SMART Lab, Ryerson University. "In designing *Big Break*, we have incorporated carefully designed music, sound effects, graphics, and interactive elements to enhance game play. Sophisticated algorithms analyze expressions and provide immediate feedback. Players also get to see themselves in short movies, providing the player with an opportunity for unique insights."

Big Break: The Acting Game is available in the Apple App Store. Emoteplay is interested in supporting as many children as possible. With every app update, 50 complimentary copies will be made available to families in financial need. In addition, a 40% discount will be applied to educational orders.

Emote Play Apps *(emoteplay.com) is a social enterprise focused on supporting social and emotional development in children and young adults through fun research-based apps.*

SMART Lab *(smartlaboratory.org) is an interdisciplinary research team at Ryerson University engaged in basic and applied research at the intersection of music, mind and action.*

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