Abstract
Instructors often embellish their demonstrations to children with exaggerated motion, pitch, and enthusiasm, a phenomenon referred to as “motionese” (Brand, Baldwin, & Ashburn 2002). Past research indicates that children imitate actions with greater accuracy when instructed with motionese (Williamson & Brand 2014). In this study, we show two types of motionese videos to two between subjects groups of 2-year-old children. The videos show an adult completing tasks using motionese with various novel objects; one group of children was shown a full-body view of the adult and another was shown only the hands of the adults. We measured children’s attention by looking times in the two conditions. To date, the results show that there is no significant difference in looking times between the two conditions. This means the exaggerated emotions and eye contact may not be an important support to the physical motions.

Introduction
Past research has shown that adults often use “motionese” – exaggerated motions and enthusiastic facial expressions (Brand, Baldwin, & Ashburn 2002). Children often imitate more efficiently when instructed with motionese versus more typical adult-directed actions. This study investigates what elements of motionese children respond to. Specifically, we examine whether there is a difference in children’s attention when presented with only the hands of a demonstrator versus when facial expressions are included. To test this, we scored children’s looking times to two types of motionese videos: one instructing with a full-body view of a demonstrator, and another instructing with only the hands of the instructor.

Hypothesis: Children who view the instruction with the entire body of the recorded demonstrator will show more attention to the video than children who view only the hands of an instructor.

Method
Participants
8 two-year-olds (3 males; M = 30.87 months, SD = 2.47) participated in this study.

Materials
One video shown to children was the full body of the instructor demonstrating specific tasks with the novel objects (“Full Body”) and another video was only the hands of the instructor (“Hands”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Demonstration Act</th>
<th>Picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slinky Box</td>
<td>1. Flip Switch atop box</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="SLINKY BOX" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>1. Remove band</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="LIGHT" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap Box</td>
<td>1. Lift handle on the lid</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="SNAP BOX" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Machine</td>
<td>1. Press button at the bottom of container</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="MUSIC MACHINE" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure
Children were randomly assigned to one of two between subjects conditions which varied in the type of video shown.

Demonstration
Children first viewed the recording of the motionese demonstration of their assigned condition.

Test
After each clip, the experimenter presented the child with the object previously shown in the video, and allowed the to play with it for 30 seconds. This process was repeated three additional times to accommodate all four subjects.

Scoring
Each experiment was recorded and coded frame-by-frame for looking times to measure attention span. Coding started when each video began, and ended when each video clip ended. Looking time was recorded when the child’s eyes were seen to be on the screen playing the video.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Average time children looked at motionese instruction videos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slinky Box</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap Box</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Machine</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No significant difference was observed between the conditions, t (4) = 0.7457, p = 2.132

Discussion
To date, no difference was observed in children’s looking time to the Full Body versus Hands demonstrations. If this pattern holds with a larger sample, it would suggest that, for short presentations, the body movements of motionese are as engaging as demonstrations where a face is present. When more data is collected, we will be able to examine whether children also learn equally from the two types of demonstrations.

References

Acknowledgments
Many thanks to the children and families who participated in this research.

Poster presented at the Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference, October 31, 2014, Atlanta, Georgia.
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