

DIR/Floor Time

DIR/Floor Time Theory:

People with autism, like everyone, need to engage in warm, connected relationships that support development of relating, communicating, and learning. This includes all parts of a child's life: parent and child, teacher and student, and children with peers. **DIR/Floortime®** builds these relationships, fostering social-emotional Developmental progress, taking into account the Individual abilities and challenges of the person (sensory, motor, communication, thinking), and leveraging our Relationships with others as they are the most important way we learn and grow together.

DIR/Floor Time Intervention:

In **DIR/Floortime®**, every time we talk, play, or teach we start by seeing if the other person is calm enough to do things with us. If not, we help the person settle down. Usually that means just waiting a bit and seeing what the person is doing (following the person's lead). Sometimes, it means doing other things with the person to help them calm down. The next thing we do is woo the person into an interaction, usually by either joining in or playfully getting in the way of the other person. We look for the 'gleam in the eye' that comes when you know the other person knows that you are both being playful. When we do this, the other person usually does something different, and so we keep doing things to see what the other person does. We try to keep these *circles of interaction* going, and as we do this we build a real, growing, learning bond with the other person. We can do this with all sorts of people, from children who seem to only flap their hands to people who can talk really well but get stuck with things like making friends. We do **DIR/Floortime** all day, every day. Its fun when we play – and with young children that is often on the floor - but it can be done in the car, at the store, in class, at home, and in any situation. **DIR/Floortime** helps people react better to change and to the things that bother them, from scratchy clothes or loud noise to challenging peer situations. **DIR/Floortime** can help people learn how to care about other people and think about how other people feel. A growing body of research evidence supports **DIR/Floortime** as a useful way to think about and help people with autism and autism-like problems.

DIR/Floor Time Goals:

DIR/Floortime® goals follow functional, developmental, emotional levels to assist the person in improving and mastering necessary developmental skills.

I. Self-Regulation and Attention

Goal: Take in sights and sounds and maintain shared attention

II. Engagement and Relating

Goal: Woo another and be wooed, stay engaged through emotions in warm interaction

III. Use Affect to Convey Intent - Two Way Communication

Goal: To do this for requests, emerging back and forth interactions

IV. Behavioral Organization and Problem Solving

Goal: Continuous flow of affective interactions with people for shared social problem solving

V. Creates and Elaborates With Symbols

Goal: Represents ideas and emotional themes in play and other interactions.

VI. . Emotional Thinking: Logical –Abstract

Goal: Bridges ideas, elaborates and can reflect on actions, motives, aware of time and space

Additional information:

Dr. Josh Feder offers monthly open community meetings in Solana Beach (look for announcements on Valerieslist@aol.com)

Website: www.circlestretch.com, www.icdl.com

Book: Engaging Autism: Using the Floortime Approach to Help Children Relate, Communicate and Think with the DIR/Floortime Approach by S. Greenspan & S. Wieder (De Capo Press, 2006)

