

*Seattle Children's Autism Series 200*  
*Autism 206 – The DIR/Floortime Model*

**Treating the Whole Child Not the Parts**  
**Supporting the Rhythms of Relationships**

**PRESENTED BY**

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- *How does the child develop the miraculous ability to attend, to be calm and interested in the world, to desire to interact with others and to “woo” those around them to interact with them?*

*(Stanley Greenspan, MD – Building Healthy Minds)*

- *How does the child learn to read other’s gestures, and indicate their needs, initially through gesture and then through the use of language?*

*(Stanley Greenspan, MD – Building Healthy Minds)*

- *How does the child develop the ability to think and plan how to interact with their world and to solve physical problems to achieve their goals?*

*(Stanley Greenspan, MD – Building Healthy Minds)*

- *How do they develop the ability to become a social beings, to think, to communicate as well as have compassion for others?*

*(Stanley Greenspan, MD – Building Healthy Minds)*

## DIR<sup>®</sup>/Floortime

### The “D” of DIR<sup>®</sup>

The Functional Emotional Developmental Capacities provide a direction for supporting the emotional journey of the child in the context of a relationship.

### Functional Emotional Developmental Capacities

- Co-regulation supporting the development of self regulation and shared attention
- Engagement
- Affect conveying Intent
- Behavioral Organization, Sense of Self and Shared Social Problem Solving with the Capacity to Stay in a Long Continuous Flow of Interaction
- Representational and Symbolic Thinking
- Building Bridges between Ideas and Emotional Thinking

## DIR®/Floortime

- The “I” of DIR®
  - The unique skills of the OT in understanding the underlying neurobiology of the child’s sensory processing, postural control, praxis and related motor planning capacities is essential as it informs us how to **tailor affective interactions** and to coach the parent or “play partner” to engage in a manner that will support the child to strengthen their developmental capacities.

### *RELATIONSHIPS* *The “R” of “DIR”*

Putting the Relationship in the Forefront is  
Core to DIR

The foundation for life is built on the ability to  
attain, and sustain a co-regulated interaction.

Relationships are the vehicle for creating  
learning experiences.

Understanding the  
Individual Profile of the child, including  
sensory processing and perceptions  
Informs us of how to tailor our  
Affective Interactions  
to  
Promote Relationships  
&  
thus enables the Child to progressively  
master their  
Functional Developmental Capacities

## Co-Regulation

Co-regulation is the social process that occurs in an interaction when individuals dynamically alter their actions with respect to the ongoing and anticipated actions of their partner.

(Fogel, 1993)

## Co-Regulation

When both partner's actions are successfully anticipated and the altered actions of the individual produce continued interaction, communication about the relationship is interpreted by both.

(Cortney A. Evans, Christin L. Porter, 2008)

## Co-Regulation

When this occurs within the rhythm of the interaction there is "shared pleasure", where both the child and the caregiver are enjoying the interaction.

(Cecilia Breinbauer, MD 2010)

## Engagement

- Intimacy,
- Trust
- Attunement,
- Being in a dance together,
- Synchronous rhythm,
- Anticipation,
- Sense of knowing,
- Predictability,
- Joy and pleasure (which implies a whole drama of shared affective sharing with build up of anticipation and then shared release of tension),
- Ability to comfort.

**All in greater and greater variety of ways.**

Diane Cullinane , MD 2010

## AFFECT

Central to all learning!

**Affective reciprocity allows children to find meaning and symbolize experience**





What is Affect?

Affect is.....

- The emotional tone that is conveyed in an interaction

Affect comes from a variety of avenues from each and every individual -

- it is the tone of voice
- the gesture that you use
- the rhythm and pacing of your voice and action
- the sigh that conveys frustration
- the excitement that is conveyed with a “jump” or a “woop”

## Affect in Interactions

- When interacting the most important thing is that I have "natural" affect
- Affect conveys the intent to interact with another person and the desire to sustain relationships
- Affect enables one to reflect on actions -your own or that of others
- Affect enables one to connect thoughts and ideas and to share them with others
- Affect enables one to convey to others how their actions impact the individual.

## How Do these Video Clips Affect You?

### Sensation-Affect-Regulation-Perception

- Sensations elicit emotional reactions that impact attention and regulation
- Affect is inherent in emotional interactions that evoke sensations
- Sensation & affective interaction contribute to each individual's unique emotional memories
- Sensation, affect, memory contribute to each individual's unique perception of sensory events

Rosemary White 2010

## *Affective* Interactions Facilitate the Developmental Process

- Affect and Engagement support the development of shared attention ->
- Affective Interactions set the foundation for the child to read the gestural cues of others and the anticipate and predict ->
- Affective gesturing leads the child to develop gestures to convey intent, to pointing and other complex gesturing and understanding causality.
- Emotions enables us to organize, store and retrieve memories.
- Affective interactions and experiences allow the child to draw meaning from sensory events.
- Affect is a central organizer of the mind and drives leaning.

## DIR<sup>®</sup>/Floortime

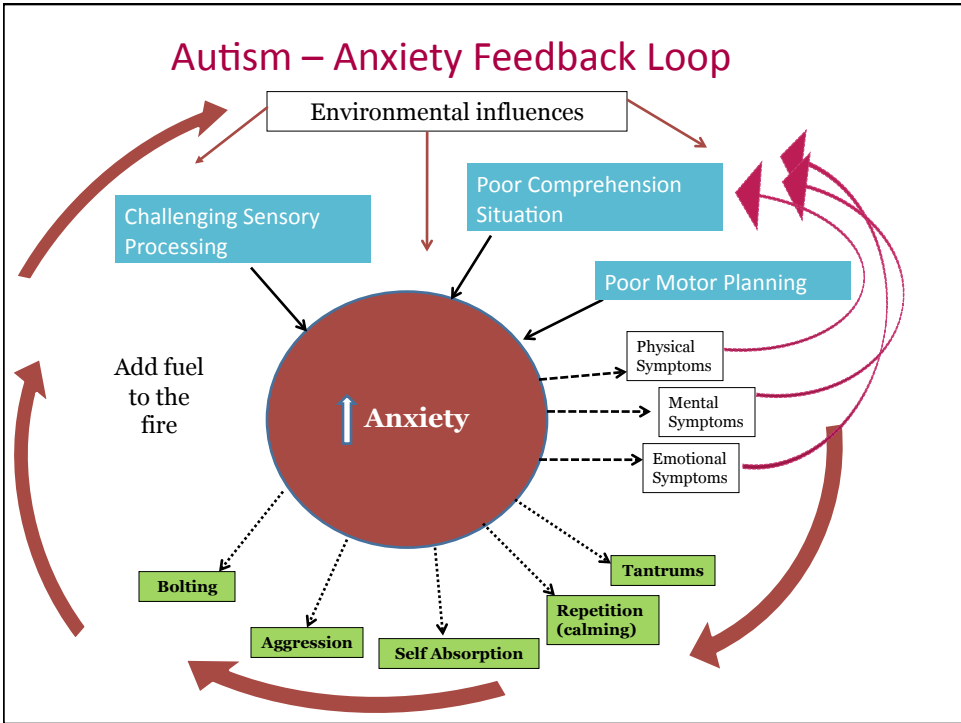
- When we take our understanding of motor control, sensory processing, sensory modulation and praxis and integrate it with the rich “emotional texture” of DIR<sup>®</sup>/Floortime we provide a treatment that addresses “the whole child” resulting in addressing the physical, the cognitive and the emotional development in a sensitive functional relationship with a significant other.

When there are Constrictions in  
Co-Regulation and Engagement

Observe and Reflect on

The Rhythms of Interaction

What May Contribute to the Constrictions



## DIR®/Floortime

### Embracing & Guiding Work with children with Sensory Processing Challenges

In essence as an Occupational Therapist DIR® has deepened the work that I do and as such has given a direction in which to integrate the many frames of reference that are core to my profession.

This guides me in my work as a therapist as my understanding of sensory processing has a clearer direction to facilitate meaningful functional relationships that support the development of the child who has challenges in sensory processing.

Of equal importance I have learned to support the parent in their vital role with their child and to put that relationship in the forefront.

## *RELATIONSHIPS* *The "R" of "DIR"*

The foundation for life is built on the ability to attain, and sustain a co-regulated interaction.

Relationships are the vehicle for creating learning interactions which are tailored to child's individual processing differences and thereby enable child to progressively master functional developmental capacities.

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Most importantly thanks to all parents and children with whom we have worked, as well as our own children, who have taught us more than anything in the world

## **WEB SITES**

- [www.icdl.com](http://www.icdl.com)
- [www.stanleygreenspan.com](http://www.stanleygreenspan.com)
- [www.celebratethechildren.org](http://www.celebratethechildren.org)
- [www.coping.org/earlyinf/floortm](http://www.coping.org/earlyinf/floortm)
- [www.coping.org/earlyinf/fltmvols](http://www.coping.org/earlyinf/fltmvols)
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