



Developmental, Individual-Differences, Relationship-Based Model

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Why is relationship so important?

- 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



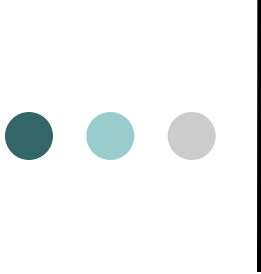
Goal of Relationship Based Approaches

- Affect connection and engagement in common interests between the child, caregivers and peers
- Build relationships which last over time
- Impact neuro-biology



DIR^R: Primary Objective

- To enable the child to form a sense of himself as an intentional, interactive and related individual with range of developmental and communicative capacities (cognitive, language, motor, social, emotional..)



WHEN WE INTERACT WITH A CHILD WE REDEFINE HIS OR HER POTENTIAL

○ Assumptions

- Every child has his or her own profile of development and requires an individualized approach which is developmentally appropriate
- All areas of developmental are inter-related
- A child's symptoms and problem behaviors often stem from underlying difficulties in sensory integration and processing, motor planning and affective integration.



Key Components of a Relationship Based Approach

- Attention/Affect
- Engagement
- Two Way Communication
- Problem Solving
- Symbolic Thinking
- Abstract Thinking



Key Components integrated into The Developmental Capacities (Ladder or Levels)

- Level 1: Shared **attention** and Regulation (begins with **affect**)
- Level 2: **Engagement**
- Level 3: **Affective** reciprocity and **two way communication**
- Level 4: Pre-symbolic shared social communication and **problem solving**
- Level 5: **Symbolic** and creative use of ideas
- Level 6: Logical and **abstract** use of ideas and thinking



Affect

- What is it?
 - Outward demonstration of emotion
 - Child is interested and emotionally connected
- Why is it important?
 - Emotions drive behavior
 - Need range of emotions or you are limited in what you can learn
 - It is the “glue” that is the basis for all learning



Affect

- What does it look like?
 - Continuous flow of emotion between child and caregiver
 - Match with emotion
 - Need to be able to read the emotion
- What do I do?
 - Observe what the child is expressing
 - Look for opening to respectfully join child in their interests
 - Once you have the connection, respond based on what child is doing



Engagement

- What is it?
 - After you have affect connection, deepen the attention with more continuous flow
 - Takes “attention” to another level
- Why is it important?
 - Necessary for learning and relationship development
 - Represents deepening of interests
 - Stepping stone to more nuanced thinking



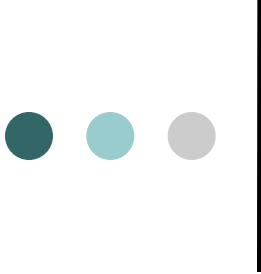
Two Way Communication

- What is it?
- Why is it important?



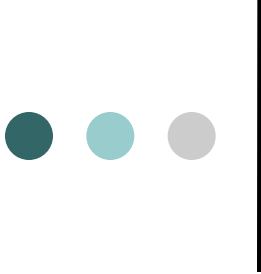
Two Way Communication

- What does it look like?
- What do I do?



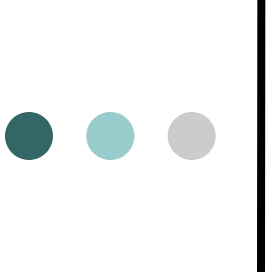
Problem Solving

- What is it?
 - Have affect connection, are engaged, now have an idea
 - Simple Problem Solving-1 idea
 - Complex Problem Solving-more than 1 idea
- Why is it important?
 - If can't problem solve can't adapt-life is not that simple
 - Need to be able to consider aspects and variables of our interests



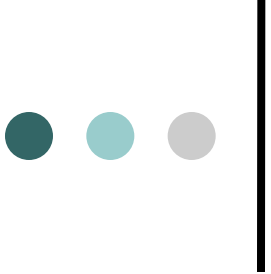
Problem Solving

- **What does it look like?**
 - **“I want to do that”...”I want to go there”...”I want that to happen”**
 - **Actions in meaningful sequences**
 - **Child is putting together steps**
 - **Have goal they are trying to accomplish**
- **What do I do?**
 - **Don't “rescue”**
 - **Use playful obstruction**
 - **Use every opportunity, makes things a challenge (i.e. don't open the bag of toys immediately)**
 - **Give autonomy with complex problem solving**
 - **Look at how many steps the child can sequence...what is the best?**



Symbolic Thinking

- What is it?
 - Ability to represent a feeling or intent in an external symbol
 - Symbols = underlying themes (i.e. independence)
- Why is it important?
 - Need capacity to have symbols of our ideas and feelings and with these symbols generalize and internalize so that every new situation is not a challenge



Symbolic Thinking

- What does it look like?
 - All earlier levels there (affect, engagement, have ideas), child then expands out to something that logically fits symbolically (give example or show video)
- What do I do?
 - Elaborate, elaborate
 - Insert obstacles to challenge, to negotiate, be more assertive, find new solutions: be compelling
 - Use affect cues to hold attention and tolerate dilemma
 - Deepen plot by posing problems: what, if, then, why, feel, predict
 - Expand reasoning and incidental learning



Abstract Thinking

- What is it?
 - Person's ability to consider multiple ideas and factors in a situation that needs resolution or clarification
 - Need to take it all in and get meaning
- Why is it important?
 - If you can't factor in multiple variables to come up with insights, won't be able to function independently and learn complex things across environments



Abstract Thinking

- What does it look like?
 - Not concerned about the outcome but the process
 - Consider many things in making decisions
 - Child is able to take you and your perspective in as a variable as well
- What do I do?
 - Be real
 - Recognize processing time needs
 - Add factors they may not have considered, help process multiple factors



The Developmental Levels: Level 1

- Shared attention and regulation
 - Can put at bay bombarding factors that take attention away-look at environment
 - Can see beginning of attention
 - Use affect that matches the child



The Developmental Levels: Level 2

- Engagement
 - Good engagement more than simple attending
 - Deeply connect around something in common with greater intensity
 - Be fully present and connected
 - Look at interests and passions and use them



The Developmental Levels: Level 3

- Affective reciprocity and gestural communication—purposeful two-way communication
 - Join and interact in a purposeful way
 - Reciprocal interaction around an interest
 - Child can show you mutuality



The Developmental Levels: Level 4

- Complex pre-symbolic shared social communication and problem solving
 - Join and interact in a purposeful way around multiple ideas
 - Err on side of being “under helpful”
 - Encourage and provide emotional support vs. doing
 - Play dumb, ask questions and be patient about outcome



The Developmental Levels: Level 5

- Creative use of Ideas and symbols
 - Use words, pictures, gestures to symbolically represent an intention
 - If don't have verbal language, pay attention to gestures, subtle cues
 - Need to value all gestural intentions,
 - Use PECS, gestures around daily routines
 - Make sure you have attention, engagement and affect



The Developmental Levels: Level 6

- Analytical/Logical Thinking and Abstract use of Ideas
 - Able to answer why?
 - Nuanced thinking
 - Weigh things, consider multiple factors
 - Sees forest AND trees
 - See grays, not just black and white



FloorTime

- What is it?

- A systematic way of working with a child to help reach functional capacities and:
 - Learn pleasure of engaging with others
 - Gain satisfaction of taking initiative and making needs known



DIR®/FLOORTIME


It is important because:

- It is an intensive intervention
- It is a comprehensive intervention
- Includes child, family, educators, therapists
- Based on recent developmental and neuroscience research
- Connects neurons/underdeveloped pathways
- Mastery of early emotional interactions



Basic Principles of FloorTime

- Follow the child's lead
- Join in at the child's developmental level and build on her natural interests
- Open, close, and extend circles of communication
- Create a developmentally appropriate play environment
- Use challenging emotions to expand affective ranges



FloorTime Principles (continued)

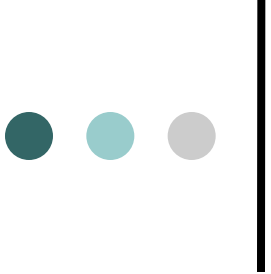
- Child must generate the idea ~
 - Encourage through use of self, toys, props
 - May rely on favorite ideas, interests, or even obsessions
 - May borrow from books, video, imitating others—use scripting
 - May be a personal concern

Child initiate and invest affectively!



FloorTime Principles: (continued)

- Use playful obstruction, as needed, or play dumb
- Expand, expand, expand ~ keep going, make mistakes, follow orders, interfere, beg forgiveness!
- Change expectations to create surprise and novelty
- Don't take no for an answer ~ objecting, rejecting and undoing is a response!
- INSIST on a response ~ child must close circle
- Be compelling but not too stressful—MATCH!



FloorTime Principles (continued)

- New meanings
- All activities should be meaningful to the child
- Give the child the problem to solve ~ but it must be a “problem for him or her!”

Interact constructively to help child do what they want to do and do not change the topic!

Treat whatever child is doing as intentional and purposeful ~ Give old behavior



FloorTime Principles

- Join children in pleasurable ways but do not back away from anger
- Difficult feelings are a part of life
- Opportunities for interaction and communication are created
- Always re-establish shared attention, engagement and circles of communication
- Always re-establish a continuous flow of back and forth affective gesturing at all times both during the foundation building levels and symbolic play



FloorTime Challenges Related to Parent's or Adult's Approach

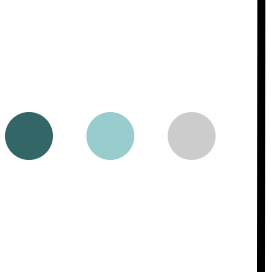
- To follow lead and not take over or direct
- DO NOT be seduced into teaching mode
- To stay on child's topic and not distract
- To know what to do next!
- To respect child's body: maintain regulation!
- To use enough affect cues



FloorTime

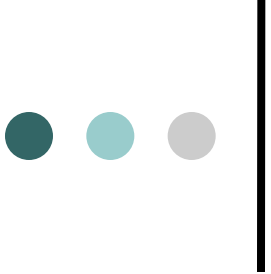
Common Mistakes

- Does not maintain a continuous flow of interaction
- Does not shift levels in order to stay engaged
- Follows child “commenting” without or little communication
- Does not provide sufficient affect cues and gestures
- Teaches instead of interacts



Coaching Each Other or Yourself

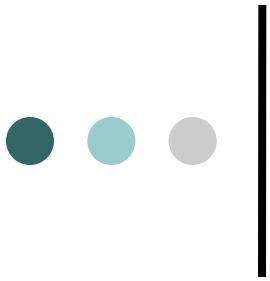
- Did you observe long enough – allow child time to warm up, adapt to new situation?
- Did you check or ask if interaction you are observing is typical or not?
- Who is initiating? Who is in the lead? Who is following?
- Who is opening the circle? Who closes it? How many circles are being opened or closed?



Coaching Each Other or Yourself

(continued)

- What are the primary challenges to the interaction?
- For example:
 - Child ~ Aimless? Avoidant? Disengaged? Poor communication-gestures, verbal? Poor motor planning or execution of intentions? Passive? Low tone? Hyper-reactive? Hypersensitive? Hypo-reactive? Poor symbolic? Fragmented? Anxious?
 - Adult ~ Takes over the lead? Changes topics? Controls child's body? Over-relies on sensory motor activities? Misses cues? Lacks affect? Poor timing? Concrete? Works below level? Works above child's level? Anxious? Depresses?
- What else can you do?



Thank you!!!

I especially want to thank the children and their families from who I continually learn.