

## What is DIR®?

DIR® is an abbreviation for Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship-based. DIR® is a model—a framework—for thinking about a child's complete development, from infancy into whole joyful personhood. While DIR can be a helpful way to think about any child's development, it is particularly useful in working with children with developmental delays. The model was developed by Stanley Greenspan, M.D. and Serena Wieder, PhD, with contributions from professionals in a variety of fields, among them speech and language specialists, occupational and physical therapists, educators, audiologists, and neurologists.

**The D:** The model focuses on the functional developmental levels a child must master including: Shared Attention, Engagement, Two-Way Purposeful Communication, Two-way Problem-solving Communication, Emotional Ideas and Abstract thinking.

**The I:** Because processing difficulties can be at the root of a child's problems with relationships, learning, and interactions, the child's unique biology and processing capacities are considered and addressed.

**The R:** Underlying the DIR® model is the conviction that social and intellectual development are based on a foundation of intimacy and joy, and that a true measure of development is found in the depth and complexity of a child's interactions, particularly with his caregivers. Special emphasis is placed on developing and strengthening the child's special relationships.

## What is Floortime?

One important component of the DIR® model is Floortime, a strategic, goal-oriented, emotion-driven way of playing and interacting with a child that helps a child initiate and respond at higher and higher developmental levels. Many children require numerous Floortime sessions each day.

## Floortime, Part 2: More Strategies and Techniques

### Course Information

*Floortime, Part 2: More Strategies and Techniques* is offered by the Astra Foundation in partnership with Acton-Boxborough Community Education. For information on session dates, please check the Astra Foundation website: [www.astrafoundation.org](http://www.astrafoundation.org), or the Community Education website: <http://comed.ab.mec.edu/>.

Location: 524 Main Street, Acton, MA  
Cost: \$90/individual or \$110/couple  
Day/Time: Tuesdays, 7pm-9pm  
Length: 6 weeks  
Sessions Offered: Winter, Summer

This course is a follow-up to *Floortime: Helping Parents work with children with developmental delays* (also offered through Acton Boxborough Community Education, in alternating sessions). The objective of the course is to help parents learn to do more effective Floortime with their children.

We will demonstrate Floortime principles and strategies through extensive use of videotape and case studies. Each week we will focus on specific skills that parents will be encouraged to try out at home. We also seek to provide a safe environment for parents to brainstorm specific situations or challenges they are facing when working with their own child. Guided discussion will be a significant part of each session. It is recommended that parents have either taken our first course or have read the book, *The Child with Special Needs* (ISBN: 0201407264), prior to the first class.

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*Please note: The skills and techniques taught in this course constitute an introduction to methods that have been successful for other families. Nothing in the course is intended to be or shall constitute medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.*

## Weekly Topics

(May be revised at instructor's discretion)

### Week 1

We'll begin by reviewing essential DIR®/Floortime principles and the basic vocabulary of circles, cues, affect and intentionality. We will talk about the Functional Developmental levels and watch video of children at each level.

### Week 2

This week our case studies will be of children with a variety of sensory integration challenges. We will talk about individual differences and how to use Floortime to strengthen a child's processing capacities.

### Week 3

We will discuss strategies for strengthening attention, regulation, engagement and simple two-way communication. We will talk about key strategies for children with different profiles (e.g. sensitive and avoidant, under-reactive, with motor planning difficulties, with capacities and constrictions at many levels)

### Week 4

We will look at children developing capacities at levels three and four (while continuing to solidify lower levels). We will talk about the importance of the "affect action connection" and the goal of developing a continuous engagement and continuous flow.

### Week 5

We will look at children developing capacities at levels five and six (while continuing to solidify lower levels). We'll discuss the importance of symbolic pretend play and how the motivation of pretending can help a child move up the developmental ladder

### Week 6

This week we'll focus on facilitating interactions between two or more children.