



DIR 101: Introduction to DIR®/Floortime for Professionals



Course Description

This course introduces the Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based model for working with children with developmental delays.

Pioneered by Stanley Greenspan, M.D. and Serena Wieder, PhD, the DIR model places a special emphasis on helping children develop and strengthen the special relationships in their lives. Greenspan and Wieder posited that subtle emotional interactions form the building blocks of all human intelligence and the origins of the highest orders of human capacity: morality, creativity, and even consciousness itself. Because processing difficulties can be at the root of a child's challenges, DIR considers and addresses each child's unique biology and processing capacities. Floortime is a strategic, affect-filled way of interacting with a child that emphasizes strong bonds of relationship and an understanding of each child's unique sensory profile to strengthen developmental capacities.

The DIR/Floortime framework is particularly helpful when working with children with attention, behavioral, communication, regulation and sensory issues, as well as PDD/Autism. In this course, we'll be focusing primarily on children from birth to 5, with applications for older children as well.

This course is the first of three courses which, when satisfactorily completed, constitute Level B of the DIR Institute's certificate program.

For more information or to register, please visit our website: <https://www.astrafoundation.org/courses-for-professionals>.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Be introduced to DIR theory and practice and demonstrate knowledge of basic principles of the model and Floortime practice.
- Discuss current infant research relating to the role of emotion and relationship in development and relate this research to DIR principles and practice.
- Learn about the first six functional developmental levels that a child must master.
- Demonstrate understanding of how sensory system challenges may impede a child's ability to form critical relationships and cognitive skills.
- Understand the importance of collaboration with the child's family in all aspects of intervention and acquire skills to support parent-child interactions.
- Understand the importance of considering the family's culture, language, context, and individual strengths and stressors when developing a program for a child.
- Become aware of the importance of self-reflection and self-awareness when working with children and families.
- Be introduced to strategies for involving children in social interactions with other children.

The Astra Foundation supports programs and initiatives that help children thrive in their home and educational environments. Since 2001, the Center for Neurodiverse Development has created training opportunities for adults working with children with challenges of relating and communicating, including programs for early intervention professionals, teachers, mental health practitioners, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and others.

Faculty

Deborah Bauch, M.S., O.T.R./L. has more than twenty-five years' experience in pediatrics and sensory integration. As the clinical director of the Center for Neurodiverse Development, she conducts classes and workshops for parents and professionals and has presented at local, regional, and national conferences. Deborah is a Training Leader and Expert DIR/Floortime provider for the Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders (ICDL). She holds a Certificate in Infant Parent Mental Health and is certified in Sensory Integration. Deborah also consults to schools, works with children and families, and serves as a mentor for professionals. She is the 2008 recipient of the Margaret I. Bauman award for outstanding therapy provider.

Maria Albarran, MA-CCC, Bilingual SLP has more than 15 years experience as a pediatric Speech Language Therapist practicing Floortime. As the program coordinator for the speech-language pathologists in her Early Intervention Program, she teaches, trains and mentors therapists and parents in neurodiverse affirming practices to incorporate Floortime into their everyday lives. She is a Training Leader and Expert DIR® Floortime™ provider for ICDL (Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders) and has taught DIR courses to multidisciplinary audiences. She is a LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) Fellow and holds a certificate in Diversity in Early Relationship Support.

Credit Information

Students may be able to apply for Massachusetts Early Intervention Competencies. Course tuition for Continuing Education students is **\$320** (includes a \$20 ICDL fee), payable to the Astra Foundation.