

DIR/Floortime, Sensory Processing and Attachment

How do they relate and come together as developmental processes



DIR® / Floortime

- Comprehensive framework of understanding
- Help client master the building blocks of relating, communicating, and thinking, rather than on symptoms alone
- D – Developmental milestones
- I – Individual Differences
- R – Relationship-based



D for Development

- Understanding where your client is in emotional development is critical to planning a treatment program
- 6 Developmental Milestones
- Building blocks that serves as foundation for healthy emotional and intellectual growth.
- In typically developing client, we use all 6 levels at any one time simultaneously



I for Individual Differences

- Each client is unique in how he experiences the world.
- Receiving and responding
- Sensory Profile is basic to development
- Inadequate processing mechanism can inhibit the client's ability to relate, communicate, and think.



R for Relationship based

- Building relationship with primary caregivers
- Floortime is a centerpiece of the DIR approach
- Floortime encourages parents and caregivers to tailor interactions with the client.
- Interactions consider the D and the I in order to gain more participation



Affect Diathesis Hypothesis

- Involves the connection of affect (which provides intent), motor planning and sequencing capacities, and symbol formation (Greenspan and Wieder, 1997)
- Second year of life – ascendancy of intentional social problem solving behavior
- Later, meaningful use of language



Jaak Panksepp

- The CARE system which biologically underlies parenting and in healthy individuals spurs us to work hard at being good parents.
- Dr. Joann Kennedy (OT): the "co-occupation" of caregiving and care-receiving
- Reciprocity of giving and receiving
- Parents need to feel joy and a sense of accomplishment and some satisfaction about positive sensory exchanges with the child.



FEDC 1. Shared Attention and Regulation

- Helping the child to become interested in this world
- Regulatory processes in both sensory and emotional adaptation
- First goal: State of calm alertness
- Harness intrinsic motivation: key is to mobilize client to emotionally pleasurable level
- Follow the child's lead, join him/her where they are at
- The child must feel in control



Autonomic Nervous System / Survival Systems

- Protection
- Withdrawal
- Shutting down
- Fear
- Safety
- Thriving
- Growth
- Interaction, love



Sensory Processing

- Has everything to do with:
- Sensory Modulation – Reticular Activating System (RAS)
- Early sensory discriminative adaptation to the environment
- Consider cycles, sleep/wake cycle, feeding cycle, arousal cycle



FEDC 2: Engagement and Intimacy

- Helping a child connect with people
- Not to force interaction; but to connect
- To share the pleasure of doing something together
- To experience mutual joy.
- Joint attention to same task



Sensory Integration

- Taking in information from the senses, skin, joints, muscles, tendons, organs
- The ability to integrate and organize the information to make sense of this world
- Using sensory integrative adaptive response to gain learning from the environment



Sensory Pathways

- Incoming information
- Organizing the information
- Formulating an adaptive response
- Building feedback and memory
- Reflexes
- Body awareness



FEDC 3: Two Way Communication

- Purposeful Emotional Interaction
- Engaging and interacting with us as play partners
- Encourage ongoing interaction through circles of communication
- Verbal or Non-verbal
- Setting up rhythm of back and forth conversation



Posture

- Ability to maintain focus and upright posture through:
- Good muscle tone
- Kinesthetic feedback
- Balance
- Rhythm
- Timing
- Coordination



Consider this

- Breath Control – Diaphragmatic Breathing
- Flexion and Extension Measurements
- Trunk Control
- Limb-on-body Dissociation
- Motor planning: ideation, initiation, sequencing, completion of task, feedback
- Bilateral Integration
- Timing and speed of movement / processing



FEDC 4:Pretend Play and Social Problemsolving

- Helping the child to connect through play in an organized way
- Abstract thinking is key to most of what we do in the world.
- Without the ability to think abstractly we are limited to the here and now; we cannot plan, we can only react.
- Starts with representational thinking.
- Pretend play involves the use of symbols, and using symbols is difficult for many children with special needs.



Body Image

- Using the body as a reference point
- Relating to others
- Internal / external awareness of the body



Consider this

- Body Map
- Ocular-Motor Control
- Jaw / Oral Motor Control
- Depth perception
- Visual Spatial Skills



FEDC 5: Feelings and Symbolic Thinking

- Helping a child develop feelings and express ideas
- In addition to expanding the depth of the child's feelings, you need to help broaden the range of feelings.
- Many children are comfortable with only a narrow band of feelings.
- They may play out only themes of compliant niceness, or only themes of anger and aggression, or only themes of dependence.
- Even if their familiar themes are in the "not so good" category, it is what they know and what they will use. Important to expand to build flexibility and decrease rigidity.



Laterality

- Using one side or both sides of the body
- Ability to cross over in the brain, body, visual, and auditory midlines
- Moving fluidly through all planes of movement on verbal or non-verbal command



Consider this

- Auditory Laterality
- Binocular Vision
- Auditory / Visual / Vestibular Triad
- Reversals in letters, words, numbers



Directionality



- External expression of laterality
- Understanding directional concepts
- Responding motorically to verbal commands of direction on body and in space



Consider this

- Uneven writing on paper
- Spatial issues on paper, such as not fitting words on a given line
- Starting on left side of a page during reading and writing
- Skipping words during reading and writing
- Spelling
- Struggles with math columns
- Visual Motor Skills



FEDC 6: Logical Thinking

- Helping a child connect ideas and developing a logical understanding of the world
- Making a bridge between child's idea and yours, between his internal world and yours.
- Develop as rich a drama with as many feelings and ideas as possible.
- Be even more interactive, engage in, talk about, question, and challenge what the child says and does.
- Respond to the emotion that underlies the child's comments.
- Your response will heighten the meaning of the words and symbols and encourage the child to continue.



Pre – Academic Executive Functioning Skills

- Goal
- Plan
- Sequence
- Prioritize
- Organize
- Initiate
- Inhibit
- Pace
- Shift
- Self-monitor
- Emotional Control
- Completing
- Working Memory



One More Thought..

- As mature adults with a relatively intact developmental profile, we do all 6 levels at once.
- We delineate the different levels so we could understand where the potential breaking down points are.
- Children could skip steps because of their intellectual capacity.



Guidelines to Increase Interaction

- Following the child’s lead and making it interactive
- Treat whatever the child is doing as intentional and purposeful
- Waiting
- Pacing
- Extend the child’s desire and sometimes play dumb.



More Guidelines

- Differentiate your actions from theirs
- Help them do what they want to do
- Put an enticement out there, get it started and see if the child takes to it – indirectness leads to less anxiety
- Give the child a problem to solve
- Playful obstruction



And more

- Build a scaffold of support first through familiarity, then offer a new and novel idea only one step ahead.
- Keep analyzing your new idea if it is going too fast too soon
- Undoing what you did is a response and counts as interaction, deal with it with a good dose of humor



And finally...

- Encourage exploration and the child's choices
- Give old behaviors new meanings – redirect a routine behavior such as spinning and flapping of hands
- Join the child in their moment
- Do not back away from frustration or anger
- Validate emotions
- Open the door to symbolic play – Representation



Case Study: I.D.

- Abandoned in a hospital due to a cleft lip/palate
- Adopted from an orphanage in China in 2012
- Came to live with her family at the age of two in the United States



Case Study: I.D

- Started at ATA on February 11, 2014
 - I.D. was 3 years, and 10 months (DOB: April 4th, 2010)
- Ended at ATA on October 8th, 2015
 - I.D. was 5 years, and 5 months on her last day
- Therapies she went through at ATA:
 - SLT, OT, DIR, EP with mom, and Tomatis Sound Training



Thank you for your time!

Maude Le Roux, OTR/L
www.atotalapproach.com

maude@atotalapproach.com

Blog:

<http://www.maude-leroux.com>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/A-Total-Approach-Maude-LeRoux-119342054754022/?fref=ts>



Resources

Hughes, Daniel A., and Jonathan Baylin F. *Brain-based Parenting: The Neuroscience of Caregiving for Healthy Attachment*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012. Print.

Hughes, Daniel A. *Attachment-focused Family Therapy*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007. Print.

Levy, Terry M., and Michael Orlans. *Attachment, Trauma, and Healing: Understanding and Treating Attachment Disorder in Children and Families*. Washington, DC: CWLA, 1998. Print.


