

Floor Time Intervention Strategy

Efficacy Rating
Level #3

A relationship-based intervention designed to facilitate affect, attachment and two-way communication between a child with special needs and an interaction partner.

What is it?

Floor Time is a systematic way of working with children to help them move forward developmentally (Greenspan, 1992; Greenspan & Weider, 1997; 1998). It requires parent participation in the promotion of milestone mastery and involves a 20-30 minute interaction period, getting down on the floor with the child

What are the goals?

1. To encourage & maintain intimacy and attention
2. To establish two-way communication: starting with subtle facial expressions & dialogue without words; moving to encourage dialogue that uses a child's emotions, hands, body, face, etc. to communicate
3. To encourage expression & use of feelings & ideas through drama & make-believe
4. To support logical thought as a child links ideas to feelings and connects thoughts

Key elements

1. Help child reestablish affective contact with primary caregivers; increased connection emerges from gestural/verbal interactions
2. Increases in relatedness lead to decreases in odd or stereotypic behaviors
3. Caregiver interacts with the child in ways that capitalize on the child's emotion, and follow the child's interests & motivations
4. Child can lead and play whatever captures the child's interest as long as the child interacts with the caregiver who turns isolated responses into 2-person activities

Circle of communication:

An interaction between two or more people in which one partner initiates, the second responds, and the first "closes the circle" by responding to the second. Interactions and initiations may be in the form of words, augmentative supported communication, motions, or gesture.

Circles of communication are critical components

1. Initially, circles are simple, contain reactions, & communicate emotions.
2. Takes advantage of a child's natural motivation, increasing the likelihood of a response through enticement
3. Playful obstructions are used to up the ante and requirement for interaction. For example, favorite foods are out of reach.
4. As circles increase in length and complexity, child achieves proficiency in relating and higher levels of emotional development.

Efficacy considerations

Greenspan & Wieder (1997) concluded the following through testimonials & chart review of 200 children:

- 58% were deemed to have "very good outcomes": purposeful, organized problem solving interactions of greater than 50 circles of spontaneous communication
- increased trust and intimate connections with parents
- displaying more pleasurable affect
- a heightened capacity for abstract thinking

Greenspan, S. I. & Weider, S. (1998). *The child with special needs: Encouraging intellectual and emotional growth*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

Floor Time Resources and Information

Reference:

Greenspan, S. I., & Weider, S. (1998). *The child with special needs: Encouraging intellectual and emotional growth*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Websites:

www.floortime.org

www.stanleygreenspan.com

www.icdl.com

Tools, Materials, Curriculum:

Greenspan, S. I., & Lewis, D., (2002). *The affect-based language curriculum (ABLC): An intensive program for families, therapists and teachers*. Bethesda, MD: Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders.

Greenspan, S., & Wieder, S. (2001). *Floor Time Techniques and the DIR Model: For Children and Families with Special Needs*. Bethesda, MD. ICDL Publications.

Floortime DVD series (www.floortime.org): 1) The Basics: Relating & Communicating; 2) Sensory Regulation & Social Interaction & Symbolic & Logical Thinking

Greenspan, S.I., DeGangi, G., & Weider, S. The Functional Emotional Assessment Scale (FEAS) for Infancy & Early Childhood: Clinical & Research Applications (www.icdl.com)

Articles:

DeGangi, G. A. & Greenspan, S. I. (1997). The effectiveness of short-term interventions in treatment of inattention and irritability in toddlers. *JDL*, 1, 277-298.

Greenspan, S. I., & Wieder, S. (2000). A developmental approach to difficulties in relating and communicating in autism spectrum disorders and related syndromes. In A. M. Wetherby, A. M. & B. M. Prizant, B. M. (Eds.), *Autism Spectrum Disorders: A transactional developmental perspective* (pp. 279-306). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Greenspan, S. & Wieder, S. (1997a). An integrated developmental approach to interventions for young children with severe difficulties in relating and communicating. *Zero to Three*, 17, 5-17.

Greenspan, S. & Wieder, S. (1997b). Developmental patterns and outcomes in infants and children with disorders in relating and communicating: A chart review of 200 cases of children with autistic spectrum diagnoses. *Journal of Developmental and Learning Disorders*, 1, 87-141.

Books:

Greenspan, S. I. (1992). *Infancy and early childhood: The practice of clinical assessment and intervention with emotional and developmental challenges*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press.

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