

AUTISM CONFERENCE

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October 2008

Is There *Really* an INCREASE?

- 1/166 persons diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder
- Increased 360% between 1994 and 2004
 - 1994- 5,775 cases
 - 3rd Qtr 2006- ~ 32,000 cases
- 84% are between ages of 3 and 21

The First Three Years

- Why Early Intervention?
 - Unparallel growth in all areas
 - Sets the stage for future learning
 - Life-long patterns of coping

THE FLOORTIME MODEL

Developmental

Individual Difference

Relationship-Based

Dr. Stanley Greenspan

Floortime is a strategy that:

- Promotes stability and consistency in developmental milestones at increasingly higher and more complex levels
- Prevents or decrease challenging behaviors
- Helps children make emotional connections, not just learn rote skills



- Recognizes the benefits of an integrated, comprehensive approach



- Adapts to child's individual needs
- Builds on child's natural interests to motivate his/her desire to connect with others
- Can be used anywhere, anytime within the context of natural daily routines



Core Developmental Milestones

Emotional Thinking
Connecting Ideas
Logical Thinking



Self-Regulation
and
Interest in World

Emotional Ideas
Representational
Capacity

Attachment
And
Forming Relationships

Behavioral Organization
Problem-Solving
Sense of Self

Intentional
Two-Way
Communication

Observe

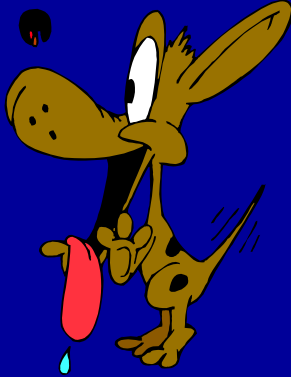
* What is the child's mood, level of interest ?



* What is the child doing ?



Join child in their activity



- * Use affect, voice, action to get child's attention and engagement



- * Build on child's activity and natural interests in a manner that motivates interaction

Open and close circles of communication



- Respond with words and gestures to child's interests and inspire child to build on your response
- Create a play environment with objects and activities the child prefers and likes
- Avoid very structured activities and games



Extend and expand circles of communication

- Help child reach own goals
- Encourage opportunities for problem-solving
- Interact playfully; use playful obstruction
- Use light touch, gleam in eye, avoid holding or confining



Floortime Guidelines

- Create play environments that build on child's natural interests
- Begin at earliest levels that have not been mastered
- Broaden range of interests
- Broaden range of processing and motor capacities
- Tailor interactions to child's individual interests
- Mobilize 6 milestones simultaneously

MILESTONE 1

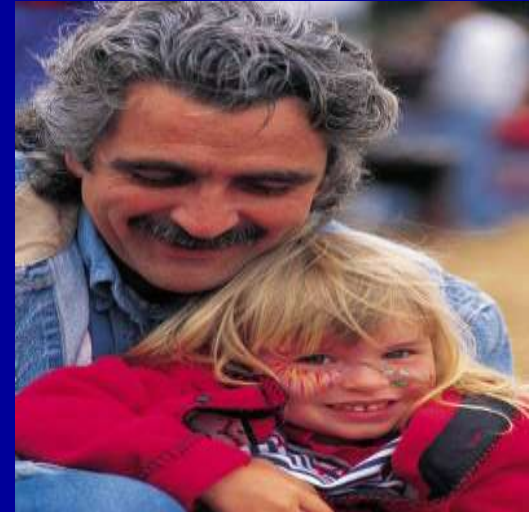
- Shared Attention and Self-Regulation
 - Ability to regulate attention and behavior while simultaneously sustaining interest in sounds, sights, smells, movement and to share attention with another person



MILESTONE 2

- Attachment and Forming Relationships

- Ability to form socially responsive relationships and to respond spontaneously to social overtures with an emotional response



MILESTONE 3

- Two-Way Communication
 - Ability to initiate and interact with others in reciprocal, purposeful manner using gestures or words to express intent, desire, and needs



MILESTONE 4

- Complex Communication
 - Ability to create complex gestures and to relate a series of actions into an elaborate and deliberate problem-solving sequence.



MILESTONE 5

- Emotional Ideas
 - Ability to experiment with emotions using play. The child is able to turn simple play into complex fantasy play, and at the same time expand his/her use of language.



MILESTONE 6

- Emotional Thinking
 - Ability to build bridges between ideas and link them together into logical sequences. Imagination becomes related logically, and the child is able to comprehend emerging concepts of space and time in an emotional manner.



Suggestions

- Provide several opportunities throughout the day for “**following the child’s lead**”
- Create interesting play and “*mini-learning*” environments that motivate child’s participation
- Get down on the floor to **interact and play** with children
- Keep child interacting as much as possible and **avoid allowing child too much time alone** or in parallel level play

Caregiver-Child Interaction Patterns

Patterns that *interfere*:

- Not tuning into or being responsive to child's desires and needs
- Under or over stimulate child
- Over controlling or being intrusive
- Interact at level below or above child's capacities

Patterns that *support*:

- Engage child in warm, affective interactions
- Awareness of and responsive to child's needs and preferences
- Encourage use of words and feelings during play

Effective Interactions:

- Encourage *emotional thinking and problem solving*
- Encourage *spontaneous learning*, not rote and mechanical responses
- Use real *interactive experiences*, real objects, real activities and pretend play, not primarily pictures and flashcards, etc.
- Provide opportunities to *interact with typically developing children* to the fullest extent possible and *when appropriate* for the child's stage of development

Most importantly...

Regulate – Engage - Expand

- Child must be *regulated* and calm before he or she can be engaged
- The child will be more likely to *engage* when *activities are compelling and interesting*
- As soon as child is regulated and engaged, and has begun to interact, always look for opportunities to *expand and extend* the level of interaction

Thank You!

