

# DIR MODEL

The Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based model of intervention (DIR®) provides a developmental framework for interdisciplinary assessment and intervention for autism and other developmental and mental health challenges. It is a comprehensive foundation model that utilises affect-based interactions and experiences tailored to individual needs to promote development.



The Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship model (also known as DIR® and DIR Floortime®), developed by the late Dr Stanley Greenspan and Dr Serena Wieder, revolutionised the concept of development. It was the first model to identify the functional emotional developmental capacities that provide the foundation for lifelong learning and relating.

The DIR model training was the first to relate these developmental capacities to the biological/neurological individual differences in sensory processing each person brings to the world. It identified relationships as the pivotal force that nurture and optimise development. Further, it was the first to propose a relationship-based model of comprehensive intervention for the autism spectrum and sensory processing disorders focusing on the core deficits of relating and communicating.

Frequently children with special needs are challenged by neurobiological factors, which make it difficult to participate and enjoy early emotional interactions with their parents. These shared interactions between parent and child that are meaningful, positive and pleasurable create the foundation necessary for all development. The DIRFloortime® model supports parents in their natural and pivotal partnership with their child – promoting their development across a wide range, including regulation, joint attention, communication and language, motor skills, cognition, ideation and execution, and social problem-solving. Floortime essentially means joining the child where they are, revisiting previously missed growth opportunities and moving forward.

The DIR model has been created and informed by experts in the fields of paediatric medicine, developmental psychology, education, speech and language, occupational and physical therapies – making it the first truly integrated multi-disciplinary approach to children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or other special need.

**D (Developmental)** defines the fundamental capacities for joint attention and regulation, engagement across a wide range of emotions, two-way communication, and complex social problem solving. These in turn govern the development of symbol formation, language and intelligence.

**I (Individual Differences)** refers to individual differences related to sensory reactivity and regulation, visual-spatial and auditory/language processing, and purposeful movement and communication.

**R (Relationship)** refers to relationships with caregivers that are the vehicle for affect-based developmentally appropriate interactions. Parents and families are central to this model because of their ongoing opportunities to support their child's everyday functioning to carry out emotionally meaningful goals based on developmental levels. Cultural and environmental influences are also considered.

(Reference: [www.profectum.org/about/dir/](http://www.profectum.org/about/dir/))