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COMBINING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH ASDS

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DEFINITIONS

FLOORTIME

The DIR (Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship Based)/Floortime approach provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and treating children challenged by autism spectrum and related disorders. It focuses on helping children master the building blocks of relating, communicating and thinking, rather than on symptoms alone.

ABA

The science in which procedures derived from the principles of behaviors are systematically applied to improve socially significant behavior to a meaningful degree and to demonstrate experimentally that the procedures employed were responsible for the improvement in the behavior.

Is a discipline devoted to the understanding and improvement of human behavior.



ASSESSMENT TOOLS

FLOORTIME

Functional Emotional Assessment Scale

FEAS

6 Developmental Milestones

1. Self Regulation and Interest in the World
– ability to remain calm, not get overwhelmed, regulating responses when confronted with sensory overload.
2. Intimacy – special love for human relationships. Infant and caregivers fall in love and deepen their intimacy.
3. Two Way Communication – the baby expresses an intention and the caregiver responds.
4. Complex Communication – link gestures into complicated responses.
5. Emotional – through play, the child experiments with intentions and wishes that he/she feels. Expression of emotions that are little unconnected islands.
6. Emotional Thinking – The child builds bridges between those islands.

ABA

Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills

ABLBS

25 different domains

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Reinforcement Effectiveness | 14. Classroom routines |
| 2. Visual Performance | 15. Generalized responding |
| 3. Receptive language | 16. Reading |
| 4. Imitation | 17. Math |
| 5. Vocal imitation | 18. Writing |
| 6. Requests | 19. Spelling |
| 7. Labeling | 20. Dressing |
| 8. Intraverbals | 21. Eating |
| 9. Spontaneous vocalizations | 22. Grooming |
| 10. Grammar | 23. Toileting |
| 11. Play | 24. Fine motor |
| 12. Social Interactions | 25. Gross motor |
| 13. Group Instructions | |



FLOORTIME - DIR

- "D" is for Developmental. Understanding where the child is developmentally is critical to planning a treatment program. The Six Developmental Milestones describes the developmental milestones that every child must master for healthy emotional and intellectual growth.
- "I" is for Individual-Difference. Each child has a unique way of taking in the world - sights, sounds, touch, etc - and responding to it. Biological Challenges describes the various processing issues that make up a child's individual differences and that may be interfering with his ability to grow and learn.
- "R" is for Relationship-Based. Building relationships with primary caregivers is a critical element in helping a child return to a healthy developmental path. Relationship building = a centerpiece of the DIR approach - encourages parents and others important in the child's life to interact with him in a way that helps him advance developmentally.



Stage 1 – Self Regulation and Interest in the World (3M)

- **Take in the sensory panorama while regulating his response and remaining calm** - balance growing awareness of sensations with the ability to remain calm
 - *Can be calm*
 - *Recovers from crying with comforting*
 - *Is able to be alert*
 - *Looks at one when talked to*



Stage 2 – Intimacy, Engagement and Falling in Love (5M)

- **Special love for the world of human relationships - the infant wants her primary caregivers or parents**
 - *Evidences positive loving affect toward caregiver*
 - *Looks and smiles spontaneously*
 - *Responds to facial expressions/voices with smiling, relaxing, and "cooing"*
 - *Evidences signs of discomfort when caregiver is unresponsive during interactive play*



Stage 3 – Two-Way Communication (9M)

- Opening and closing circles of communication
 - When a baby falls in love with his parents he realizes he can have an impact on them. (When he smiles at Mommy, she smiles back. When he reaches out to Daddy, Daddy reaches back. The baby expresses a feeling or an intention, and his caregiver responds. This is the beginning of communication; the baby and his grown-ups are having a dialogue-opening and closing circles of communication. When a child reaches out—with a look, for example—he opens the circle. When the parent responds—by looking back—he builds on the child's action. When the child in turn responds to the parent—by smiling, vocalizing, reaching, or even turning away—he is closing the circle)
 - *Able to interact in a purposeful manner*
 - *Able to initiate signals and respond to others' signals*



Stage 4 – Complex Communication (13M)

- Expanding the Circles of communications to Solve Problems
 - Increase in the number of circles closed ALONG with increase in COMPLEXITY
 - Vocabulary of gestures - for expressing wishes. By linking them together can express fairly complicated thoughts
 - *Organizes behavior and emotion*
 - *Sequences gestures together*
 - *Responds to caregiver's gestures*
 - *Forms chains of interaction*
 - *Elaborates sequences of interactions witch convey basic emotional themes*



Stage 5 – Emotional Ideas (24M)

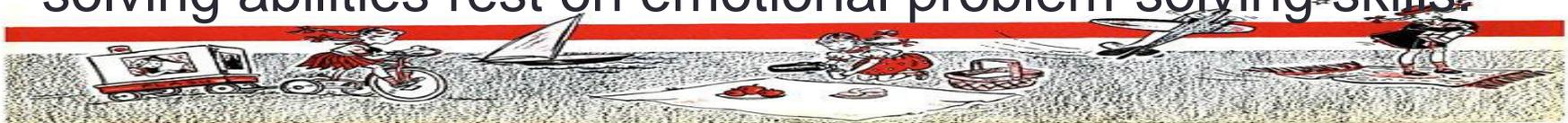
• Creating Emotional Ideas

- The child's ability to form ideas develops first in play.
- Along with this idea-laden play comes expanded use of words.
- Through idea-laden play and expanded use of words the child is learning that symbols stand for things. (The empty box in which he bathes his doll is a symbol for a bathtub).
- Eventually he is able to manipulate ideas, to use them in ways that meet his needs. Calling for mom instead of crying or sometimes just thinking of mom calms him down



Stage 6 – Emotional and Logical Thinking (36M)

- **Child connects the pieces (at previous stage - child's emotional ideas were like little unconnected islands)**
 - **Begins to understand emerging concepts of space and time in a personal, emotional way**
 - **Connects ideas in terms of spatial and verbal problem solving;** instead of seeing separate block towers as isolated structures, she can link them together to make a big house.
 - **She can answer what, when, and why questions, enjoy debates, logically articulate an opinion, and begin the long journey to higher and higher levels of abstract thinking. Both verbal and spatial problem-solving abilities rest on emotional problem-solving skills.**



Intervention Guidelines

- Get down to the child's level
- Start within the activity the child is engaged in
- Block access to item activity to facilitate the interaction/open and close circles of communication

Ex: child wanders around the room

Adult blocks until child looks at adult
(opening the circle)

Adult gets out of the child's way while modeling "Move"
(Building on child's action)

!! Child looks back at adult and/or imitates "Move" **!!**
(closing the circle)



Intervention Guidelines - Continued

- Intervention is about the process NOT the end result – no data is collected (although goals are set, they are measured at longer intervals)
- Almost always the intervention starts at the first level (organizing the sensory information) – gross motor, sensory play!
- Advance/expand interaction through choices (never/rarely decide for the child) – child always makes a choice although sometimes may not be obvious (adult must pay very close attention to the child's non-verbal behavior)
- Use high affect and exaggerated facial expressions to draw child's attention to faces and non-verbal cues



Intervention Guidelines - Continued

- Implement time delays to allow child to process and emit a response but if a response not given in 10-15 seconds the adult **infers** the response based on child's body language
- Limit use of toys and concentrate on interaction
- Adult's role – to guide interaction by
 - Playing dumb
 - Creating opportunities for problem solving
 - Labeling what the child does by using simple statements (labels and actions)
 - Act out on child's ideas (no matter how ridiculous they may be 😊)



ABA – Applied Behavior Analysis

- Discipline devoted to the understanding and improvement of human behavior.
- Behavior = anything that a person does
- Refer to behavior in terms of appropriate vs. inappropriate (NOT good or bad)
- Goal – to increase appropriate behaviors and decrease inappropriate behaviors
- How? - By identifying how environmental factors influence the occurrence of behavior.



ABCs of behaviors

- **Environmental factors that influence behavior – classified in 2 main categories**

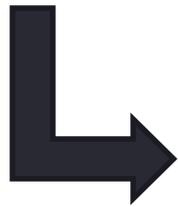
- **Antecedents – events that occur before the behavior (other people, sights, smells, etc)**
- **Consequences – events that occur after the behavior (access to items, attention, praise, etc)**

Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence



Behavior Change

- **Occurs through antecedent and consequence manipulations**
 - **Antecedent manipulations** = setting up/arranging the environment in a way that facilitates or impedes the occurrence of a behavior
 - **Consequence manipulations** = changing (by increasing/decreasing/removing) the stimulus delivered after the behavior



REINFORCEMENT = at the core of behavior change



Behavior Change

Increase
Appropriate
Behaviors

REINFORCEMENT

Decrease
Inappropriate
Behaviors



Reinforcement / Reinforcer

- Reinforcement = A procedure through which an event (called a reinforcer) is delivered or presented immediately after a specific behavior occurs and results in an increase in the rate of that particular behavior.
- Reinforcer = An event that follows a behavior and increases the rate of that behavior.
 - An item/activity functions as a reinforcer only if:
 - It immediately follows a behavior
 - It increases the rate of that behavior



Reinforcer Effectiveness

D – Deprivation

I – Immediacy

S – Size

C - Contingency



Other Terms

SD – Discriminative Stimulus
(instruction you give)

Prompt – An extra stimulus used to increase the likelihood that the child will emit the correct response

Modeling – Demonstrating the desired behavior so that it can be imitated (V1)



Teaching Guidelines

- It's about the end result – the goal is to master/learn functional skills
- Set up the environment
- Deliver the SD – ONE TIME ONLY!!
- IF correct response THEN reinforcer is delivered
- IF no response/error THEN prompts are implemented AND reinforcer is delivered
(by delivering the reinforcer immediately after the prompt you signal to the child what response you are looking for)
- Represent task/re-deliver the SD (V2)



Side by Side

	FLOORTIME	ABA
Developed around	“Affect drives thought”	History of reinforcement determines human behavior.
Focus on:	Mastering the building blocks of relating, communicating and thinking.	Using principles of behavior to improve socially significant behavior to a meaningful degree. Devoted to the understanding and improvement of human behavior.
Addressing Behaviors	Sees all behavior as an expression of child’s feelings and representational ability.	Ignores/extinguishes inappropriate behaviors and replaces them with more appropriate ones.
How they do it	Use child’s current abilities as starting point and build on existing skills based on child’s interests. (most behaviors interpreted as initiations)	Use mostly reinforcement to increase the frequency of responding under stimulus control. Teaching is controlled by the teacher.
Teaching guidelines	Follow the child’s lead, co-acting, modeling, and encouraging meaningful communication. Using errors as an opportunity to teach the child to problem solve and to find out the meaning of words/how the world works.	Using various prompting procedures to avoid errors and provide the child with the opportunity to be successful. Errorless teaching is preferred.



Guidelines

	FLOORTIME	ABA
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses child's lead –does not mean you just follow the child around -Use natural environment as teaching environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teaching environment is set up by therapist -Materials are selected/created in advance -Initially, most distracters are eliminated from the teaching environment to ensure attending to relevant stimuli
Teaching methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -MODELING is main teaching tool -There is NO physical prompting but there is a lot of “blocking” -Choices are used to increase the number of exchanges -High affect is used as a mean to “pull” the child in the interaction -Adult meets the child at the child's level (both physically and developmentally) -There is no “alone” time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PROMPTING is main teaching tool -Physical prompts are used across most areas -Affect is limited during teaching time but should be implemented during reinforcement time -Adult pulls the child in the adult-set environment -There is some alone reinforcement time allowed



Guidelines

	FLOORTIME	ABA
Self stimulatory behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Regulatory function -Use them as base for interaction -Integrate them in purposeful behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Blocked and replaced with appropriate behaviors -Not reinforced (unless part of a complex extinction protocol) (V3&4)
Non-verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledged as communicative intent -Given purpose and paired with language -First step towards building relationships -Adult MUST be in-tuned with the child and interpret the smallest non-verbal cue – give it meaning and build on it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -. Taught in a specific sequence and reinforced - Non-functional / off task non-verbal cues are ignored
Verbal Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use natural occurring opportunities -Modeling is the main teaching avenue -Time delays are implemented as prompts for spontaneous language (V5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Multiple opportunities are set up for requesting and commenting -Prompting is the main teaching avenue -Language is addressed through a systematic teaching process (V6)



Guidelines

	FLOORTIME	ABA
Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-All behaviors = communicative intent-Are acknowledged and considered initiations for interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Inappropriate behaviors = ignored/extinguished through specific protocols-Appropriate behaviors = reinforced to increase the future probability
Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-The teaching environment-Follows the child lead to expand on play skills-Slowly integrate non-preferred items in preferred play-Concentrates on increasing the number of back and forth exchanges (V7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Taught in a systematically programmed sequence-Adult leads the interaction and play scene – initially!!-Use preferred items to reinforce play with non-preferred items-Concentrates on increasing appropriate use of toys-Sometimes is part of independent tasks (V8)



WHICH ONE IS BETTER? WHICH ONE IS FOR MY CHILD?

- Both!
- Use both strategies to fill in the blanks/meet your child's individual needs!



How Does it Work?

- Use both strategies together – set up programming that works on both skill acquisition and building relationships
- Intersperse between the two – one of the approaches takes lead
 - short periods of time
 - longer periods of time



HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY CHILD NEEDS?

- Write down your child's strengths and needs.
 - If all your child's strengths fall in the same category and his/her needs fall all in a different category. (Lack of balance!)
- Observe your child in different settings (including therapy)
 - If your child displays more skills (mastered) in one setting versus the other.
 - If he/she does not generalize skills
 - If he/she does not apply learned concepts within activities.
- If your child does not acknowledge your presence when you enter a room/notices you are gone when you leave.
- If your child is not "in love" with his/her therapists
- If your child can form relationships but engages in aggressive or disruptive behaviors when challenged, placed in a new situation, or does not get his/her way.
- If they are very inconsistent in displaying their skills
- If their response rate is slow.



When Do I Need What?

ABA

- Limited/no imitation skills
- Limited receptive language skills – includes following simple instructions (lack of ability or compliance); identifying simple objects/pictures
- Limited expressive language skills – includes requesting for items, actions; rigid/rote requests
- Noncompliance across all settings and tasks
- Slow acquisition rate – requires a lot of repetition/exposure to learn things
- Hi intensity/frequency of self-stimulatory behaviors
- May be able to initiate but not able to follow friends' ideas (DD)

FloorTime

- Limited engagement (even after therapy)
- Limited awareness of others
- Uses all free time to engage in solitary/self stimulatory behaviors
- Non-functional expressive language – may have a lot of words but most language = scripted or rote; echolalia
- Non-contextual language – scripting
- Limited and rigid play skills
- Limited ability to initiate play or interactions
- Short reciprocal interactions (LH)

