The Development Part of the DIR®/Floortime™ Model
D = Developmental Capacities

“Functional Emotional Developmental Capacities”

Core capacities that integrate all areas of functioning into one milestone
D = Developmental Capacities

Functional Emotional Developmental Milestones

- Central role of affect and emotion that works as a “team leader”
- Orchestrates the entire mental team
- Covers overall development of a
D = Developmental Capacities

Stage 1: Regulation and Interest in the World

- Self-regulation, shared attention
- Purposeful movements
  - Moving head toward voices and people
  - Rhythmic movements of the baby with caregivers
- Needs the element of affect to take a purposeful interest in the world

- Sensory Affect Motor Pattern (SAM)
  - Affect links sensation coming in with the coordinated motor pattern
**D = Developmental Capacities**

### Stage 1: Setting the Stage for Further Development

#### Main Points:

- Without pleasurable affect, there is no purposeful looking/listening nor rhythmic movements.
- SAM is critical at the first stage.
- The basic capacities are experience based. Without the experience, the brain does not develop optimal levels of cognitive, language, social or emotional skills.
- Early experiences are critical for most of the brain development.
- Early affect connection is important for the first stage and for setting the agenda for further mental and brain development.
Developmental Capacities

Stage 2: Engagement or Falling in Love

- 2-4 months of age
- Special interest in the human world
- Warm smiles and interaction with the caregivers
- Synchronous vocalizations and arm movements
- Broadening of emotional range (protest, curiosity, as well as pleasure and delight)
- Emerging attachment and relationships
- Further cognitive, social and emotional development
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Stage 3: Two-Way Purposeful Communication

- 3-9 months of age
- Beyond engaging with the caregiver but communicates with the caregiver
- Learns cause and effect (baby’s smile leads to a smile)
- Learns social reciprocity
- Learns to respond and comprehend others’ emotional signals
- Differentiate between their own emotions and sounds (different feelings get different reactions from caregivers)
- Cannot teach social skills in a social settings with memorized rules

✓ Need to learn the social signals and how to read and respond to them instead of memorizing rules
✓ Even at older ages, with experience, social signals can be learned
Stage 3: Two-Way Purposeful Communication Outcomes

- Stage 3 introduces many cognitive, language, motor, and sensory processes.
- As the baby learns two-way purposeful communication, she is learning self-regulation.
- Emotional signalizing is used for negotiating what the baby needs.
- Self-regulation is the product of two-way affective signaling.
- Through experience (particularly in this stage), self-regulation occurs through growth and adulthood.
Stage 4: Shared Social Problem-Solving

- 9-18 months of age
- Toddler is learning a continuous flow of back and forth communication – circles of communication
  - The key to look for is if the child is closing the circle of communication
    - Usually weaknesses in this continuous flow are seen among children diagnosed with ASDs and children with other special needs
  - Should be seeing 50 plus circles of communication in a row

The Greenspan Floortime Approach - “D” Part of Model
Stage 4: Shared Social Problem-Solving (continued)

Vulnerability within this stage:

- Added stressors (illness, toxic chemical) can increase the likelihood of a regression
- If you strengthen this stage, it may decrease the likelihood of a regression
### Stage 4: Shared Social Problem-Solving (continued)

A *Sense of self* is forming because the child is now interacting and getting feedback from the environment…

- Learning what love, anger, discipline, etc. is about
- Learning to operate in terms of patterns, not just isolated behaviors
  - Patterns having to do with love, curiosity, discipline, etc. define the child and their expectations of others
- The child is learning the concepts that will define the language that they are yet to learn in terms of words and symbols.
  - Words will be shorthand labels of what the child already knows
Stage 4: Shared Social Problem-Solving (continued)

- If this stage is not occurring, the words that they learn will be scripted (for example love = when I give mom a kiss)
- The child is learning to be a better self-regulator - emotional interactions help internalize their limits, be attentive and focused
- The child forms the ability to have a symbolic world (more than just language and words). They have multi-sensory images of sight, sounds, smells, relationships that are “symbols” used to think and acquire meaning
  - Fixed perceptions and actions are separated and replaced by problem-solving
    - When you separate the perception from action, the child has a free-standing perception
Stage 4: Shared Social Problem-Solving (continued)

- The more the child can master functional emotional learning, the more the child can develop symbols and have meaningful language, not just scripted language.

  - Key to the intervention approach
  - Experienced-based – the child interacts with the environment; separates perceptions from actions; forms free-standing images; invests those images with emotional meanings; and creates meaningful symbols.
    - With genetic impediments, there are other pathways to get to these outcomes.
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Stage 5: Creation of Ideas

- Use symbols in pretend play
- Meaningful use of language instead of repetitive phrases
- Learns new words in a problem solving manner
- Full engagement, back and forth communication, emotional investment
Stage 6: Creation of Logical Bridges Between Emotions and Ideas

- Combining emotionally meaningful ideas together
- Thinking at the symbolic level
- Reasoning why they feel the way they do, connect feelings together
- Connect ideas of the immediate past, present, and future together
**Developmental Capacities**

**Stages 7, 8, and 9:**

The first 6 stages build the foundation for more advanced stages:

- **Stage 7** - Multi-causal Thinking
- **Stage 8** - Comparative Thinking (not just why, but how much)
- **Stage 9** - Internal Sense of Self
  - Reflects on feelings, comparing how you feel vs. how you should feel; requires a sense of self (around ages 10-13 years and builds)
  - Forms judgment and negotiates the tasks of adolescence and adulthood – high levels of creative and reflective thinking

All progress is meaningful through the stages, even if it doesn’t reach all the intended stages.