DIR® and DIRFloortime® Evidence-Base Quick Facts

The following is a brief sample of the evidence-base supporting DIR and DIRFloortime (Floortime). The research includes the highest levels of evidence. Unlike behavioral approaches which narrowly focus on specific behaviors, DIR is an interdisciplinary, individualized, whole-child, developmental approach that is broad in both its approach and its impact, making it more complex to quantify in research. Nevertheless, the research that supports DIR and the DIRFloortime approach is strong and continues to mount.

Four randomized-controlled studies were published since 2011 identifying statistically significant improvement in children with autism who used Floortime versus traditional behavioral approaches (Solomon, et. al., 2014; Casenheiser, Shanker &Steiben, 2011; Lal and Chhabria, 2013; Pajareya and Kopmaneejumruslers, 2011). These studies also showed the effectiveness of addressing the caregiver (Casenheiser et. al., 2011; Solomon, et. al., 2014) and specific skill improvement including turn taking, two way communication, understanding cause and effect and emotional thinking (Lal and Chhabria, 2013).

DIRFloortime has the strongest research of any intervention to support its effectiveness in improving the core challenges of autism including relating, interacting, and communicating while decreasing caregiver stress and improving parent-child relationships.

Solomon, Necheles, Ferch, and Bruckman (2007) conducted a pre-post survey of the Play and Language for Autistic Younsters (PLAY) Project Home Consultation program. This program, based on the DIR model, is used in fifty agencies across seventeen U.S. states. Results indicated statistically significant improvement in the children's Functional Developmental Levels and 100% of the parents reported satisfaction in participating.

In 2002, a pre/post-randomized controlled trial utilizing an approach based on developmental, individual-differences, and relationship-based philosophy was published by Salt, Shemilt, Sellars, Boyd, Coulson and Mc Cool. The study showed not only statistically significant improvement in specific skill development, but also that caregivers reported a decrease in stress with treatment while the control group showed an increase in stress.

Case studies have also been effective in supporting the use of DIRFloortime with children with autism. Dionne and Martini (2011) demonstrated statistically significant improvement in communication between parent and child. Wieder and Greenspan (1997, 2005) did comprehensive case studied that spanned from 8-15 years. These studies supported the long lasting results DIRFloortime had on individual child skills, as well as, the emotional connections the families were able to develop over time using this approach.

The evidence is strong and building – DIRFloortime works! Learn more at www.icdl.com/research.

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DIR® and DIRFloortime® Evidence-Base Quick Facts

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