DIRFloortime: An Innovative Approach to Supporting Development Through Connection and Understanding

Jessica Townsend
jt1790@mynsu.nova.edu

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DIRFloortime: An Innovative Approach to Supporting Development Through Connection and Understanding

Jessica Townsend, OTD-S
Julie Nickels, MS, OTR/L, Danielle Lemon OTD, OTR/L, Nancy Ruggles, MS, OTR/L
Power of Play (POP) Pediatric Therapy

Introduction
One in six children in the United States has one or more developmental disabilities or other developmental delays (CDC, 2021).
- Delays like these can have an impact on a child’s foundational ability to learn, communicate, and interact with others (New York University Langone, 2021).
- An innovative approach to treatment of developmental delay commonly used among therapists is called DIR/Floortime®.
- This approach is being recognized as the next generation of evidence-based interventions for autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- DIR can also be used to support development for neurodivergent and neurotypical persons throughout the lifespan.

Site Description
POP Pediatric Therapy
- Outpatient pediatric therapy clinic located in Forest Park, IL.
- Target population: children ages birth – 18 years old with various diagnoses and conditions.
- Mission Statement:
  - “POP Pediatric Therapy is a multi-disciplinary clinic providing therapy using a respectful and inclusive lens while supporting families using a developmental, individualized and relationship based approach.” (POP Pediatric Therapy, 2022).
- Services offered:
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Speech Therapy
  - Physical Therapy
  - Early intervention
  - Mental Health Services

Summary of Needs Assessment
Identified site needs:
- Support speech language therapists’ through DIR/Floortime training.
- Help build SLP’s knowledge of DIR/Floortime model particularly pertaining to regulation and engagement.
- Develop virtual resource with video footage of clients.
- Provide information on the DIR/Floortime model, specifically functional emotional developmental capacities (FEDC) 1-3.

Literature Review Summary
Floortime is an intervention that is used to promote an individual’s development through a respectful, playful, joyful, and engaging process (Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders [ICDL], 2009).
- The Floortime approach is of particular interest to occupational therapists since it takes place in the participant’s environment and is centered on the child’s main occupation, which is play (Dionne & Martini, 2010).
- Adding a modest home-based DIR/Floortime® parent training approach may yield clinically meaningful improvements in attention and imitation for children with a range of developmental challenges (Pajeray & Kongkaew, 2019).
- Ratcliff et al. (2021) published a cross-sectional quantitative research study that utilized 1,420 children and adolescents with ASD between the ages of 6-17. Results of this study determined that emotional regulation is a barrier to participation in occupations in children/adults with ASD.

Learning Objectives Achieved
1. Completed DIR 101 certification course via ICDL to use in practice with pediatric population.
2. Developed a slide deck with video footage of children from treatment sessions with additional information on the DIR/Floortime model, specifically functional emotional developmental capacities (FEDC) 1-3.
3. This resource will remain at the clinic to be used as a learning tool for parents, POP staff members, and future POP students.
4. Built an understanding of the power of connection and relationship in supporting development through clinical practice skills utilizing the DIR/Floortime approach.

Implications for OT Practice
Pediatric occupational therapists who are versed in childhood development and seek to support growth and expansion through attainment of milestones should be familiar with the DIR/Floortime® approach, which is based on the DIR® model developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan and his colleagues in the 1990s.
- DIR/Floortime is a holistic and client centered approach to treating developmental delay through meaningful and joyful connections.
- Occupational therapists proclaim commitment to a client-centered approach to treatment, meaning that they respect and value their clients’ right for autonomy and personal choice.
- Occupational therapists must become familiar with the Floortime approach, as directly aligns with occupational therapists’ standards for care.

Capstone Project Description
The purpose of this capstone project was to explore Floortime as a holistic intervention approach and gain understanding of the power of connection and relationship in supporting development. My focus areas were clinical practice skills and program development.

Goals:
1. Complete DIR 101 certification course via ICDL to use in practice with pediatric population.
2. Develop a virtual resource for parents, POP staff members, and future POP students with information on the DIR/Floortime model, specifically functional emotional developmental capacities (FEDC) 1-3.
3. Build an understanding of the power of connection and relationship in supporting development through clinical practice skills utilizing the DIR/Floortime approach.

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References Available Upon Request