

# It's Floor Time!



**ALL CHILDREN MOVE THROUGH STAGES ONE BUILDING ON THE NEXT.** These stages are based on early emotional interactions. They provide the basis for our intellect, communication skills, and sense of self, as well as the basis for such familiar skills as counting and taking turns. These functional skills are the underpinning of all advanced thinking, problem solving and coping.

**Floortime Therapy** believes that the key to unlocking a child's full potential lies in the relationship between the child and caregiver. It is a specific technique to both follow the child's natural emotional interests and at the same time challenge the child towards greater mastery of their social, emotional, and intellectual capacities.

This model is a comprehensive framework which enables psychologists, parents, and educators to construct a program tailored to the child's unique challenges and strengths. During treatment the child's development is constantly assessed and treatment is tailored to meet the child's needs. This model respects the child's individual differences and allows parent's the opportunity to step inside their child's world. In this model the relationship takes precedence over any negative behavior and it is believed that as the relationship between parent and child develops so too will the child.

## BENEFITS OF FLOORTIME THERAPY

### Child

- Child learns to relate, communicate, and think emotionally
- Facilitates child's capacity for warmth and attachment
- Respects sensory preferences while gradually increasing tolerance
- Communication through gestures leads to the use of words
- Emotions are connected with intent, words, and ideas

### Parent

- Parent's are integral partners in the child's development
- Increases a sense of closeness between parent and child
- Increases a sense of competency in meeting the child's needs

### Professional / Educational Setting

- Easily integrated into classroom setting
- Useful in 1:1, small group, and large group settings
- Supports development in all areas, including intellectual, language, fine/gross motor, social emotional skills, and self motivation
- Decreases secondary behaviors resulting from challenges in communication, relating, problem solving, and sensory processing



## FLOORTIME TECHNIQUES

### *5 Step Approach to Meaningful Interactions*

#### **1. Wait Watch and Wonder**

Become more attune to your child's needs, through the process of observing and attempting to understand your child's natural patterns and style of relating

#### **2. Approach When an Opening Occurs**

Respond to any opening of communication from your child. Let go of your agenda, slow down, step into your child's world and become a partner in their play.

#### **3. Follow the Child's Lead**

Be with your child on his or her terms, asking questions and making calm and encouraging remarks.

#### **4. Extend and Expand Interactions**

Facilitate the expansion of your child's ideas and emotional themes. Create opportunities for challenge and assist your child in mastering frustration tolerance.

#### **5. Opening and Closing Circles of Communication**

Importance of having a beginning, middle, and end to play to create a sense of security and predictability for your child. As the relationship with your child develops circles of communication will begin to open and close rapidly.

## GOALS OF FLOORTIME

### **For Child:**

- Provide child with focused, nonjudgmental attention
- Develop intentionality, motivation, curiosity, and exploration
- Promote sustained and focused attention
- Refine the child's signal giving
- Enhance mastery of sensorimotor and developmental challenges through the context of play
- Broaden the repertoire of parent/child interactions
- Develop a secure and joyful attachment between parent and child
- Enhance flexibility and range in interactive capacities

### **For Parents:**

- Develop better signal reading of their child's cues and needs
- Become more responsive and attuned to their child, allowing the child to take the lead in the interaction
- Develop a sense of parental competence as a facilitator rather than as a director of the child's activity
- Take pleasure in their child in a totally non-prohibiting setting
- Appreciate their child's intrinsic drive for mastery and the various ways in which it is manifested
- Change their internal image of each other to that of a competent parent and a competent child

