



What is DIR®?

DIR is the **D**evelopmental, **I**ndividual-differences, & **R**elationship-based model (pronounced saying each letter as an initialism: D.I.R.). It was developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan to provide a foundational framework for understanding human development. It explains the critical role of social-emotional development starting at birth and continuing throughout the lifespan. It also provides a framework for understanding how each person individually perceives and interacts with the world differently. The model highlights the power of relationships and emotional connections to fuel development. Through a deep understanding of the "D" and the "I" we can use the "R" to promote healthy development and to help every child and person reach their fullest potential.

DIR is rooted in the science of human development and can sound very technical at times. However, it is also very simple. It is a pathway to promote healthy development in a respectful manner that builds connections, understanding, love, communication, and engagement.

*Let's help our children become
the poets of their inner lives.
-Stanley Greenspan*

The objectives of the DIR model are to build healthy foundations for social, emotional, and intellectual capacities rather than focusing exclusively on skills and isolated behaviors.

- The "D" describes development from the perspective of the individual, where they are and where they are headed. Understanding the unique developmental process means allowing space for each person to be respected and guided in his or her own personal developmental journey.
- The "I" describes the unique ways each person takes in, regulates, responds to, and comprehends the world around them.
- The "R" describes how relationships fuel our development. Humans are social beings and relationships are a key to our human development. DIR harnesses the key affective (emotional) aspect of these relationships to promote development.

Understanding DIR can help us promote healthy development in all children, but it is especially powerful in helping children on the autism spectrum or with other developmental or emotional challenges.