



Genesee Lake School

at ODTC

Early Childhood Program

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship-Based Model (DIR®)

Our Early Childhood classroom strives to achieve maximum student involvement, interaction, communication and learning. The DIR®/Floortime™ Model (Developmental Individual Differences, Relationship-Based) has been developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan and Dr. Serena Wieder, as outlined in their book *Engaging Autism*. The Models' principles and practices are used as the foundation for our Early Childhood services. We focus on interaction and engagement as a means of developing language, social, emotional, behavioral, and readiness skills.

The philosophy of DIR® is, "If you teach a person to relate, communicate, and think, then they will learn to relate, communicate, and think." The goal of DIR® is to strengthen the developmental foundations of relating, communicating, and thinking through:

- assessment and understanding of each child's developmental progress;
- consideration of individual differences and unique modes of processing information;
- fostering of emotionally meaningful relationships and playful Floortime™ interactions to develop skills over time. Floortime is a specific technique used to follow the child's natural emotional interests while simultaneously challenging him/her towards increased mastery of the social, emotional, communicative and intellectual capacities.

SCERTS®

SCERTS® is an effective educational model for working with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. It provides specific guidelines for helping a child become a competent and confident social communicator, while preventing problem behaviors that interfere with learning and the development of relationships. It is also designed to help families, educator and therapists work cooperatively as a team, in a carefully coordinated manner, to maximize progress in supporting a child.

"SCERTS" refers to the focus on:

- **"SC" – Social Communication:** The development of spontaneous, functional communication, emotional expression, and secure and trusting relationships with children and adults;
- **"ER" – Emotional Regulation:** The development of the ability to maintain a well-regulated emotional state to cope with everyday stress, and to be most available for learning and interacting;
- **"TS" – Transactional Support:** The development and implementation of supports to help partners respond to the child's needs and interests, modify and adapt the environment, and provide tools to enhance learning (eg., picture communication, written schedules, and sensory supports). Specific plans are also developed to provide educational and emotional support to families, and to foster teamwork among professionals.

FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM

S.M.A.R.T. – Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training

The S.M.A.R.T. curriculum provides students with a multi-sensory approach to learning. S.M.A.R.T. activities are designed to enhance the physiological and neurological readiness skills students need to succeed in school. Students participating in S.M.A.R.T. activities can benefit from enhanced large and fine motor skills, visual perception, and eye-hand coordination. When these foundation skills are enhanced and developed, children are better prepared for learning and social engagement. The S.M.A.R.T. curriculum is designed to help each child progress at his or her own rate, in a positive "play-like" atmosphere.

Yoga Calm®

Supported by the latest research in neuroscience, trauma and social/emotional learning, Yoga Calm® integrates simple yoga-based activities, bibliotherapy, mindfulness exercises and social/emotional games. The playful approach helps:

- Reduce anxiety and regulate emotions
- Improve self-control, concentration, and imagination
- Increase strength, flexibility, body awareness and balance
- Improve self-esteem
- Enhance communication, interaction and trust

Speech/Language and Occupational Therapies

For speech and occupational therapies to be most effective, it is imperative that strategies be used throughout the day. The therapists work directly in the Early Childhood classroom to promote generalization of newly acquired skills and to model strategies for the teachers and staff.

The Occupational Therapist supports the acquisition of readiness and self-help skills, play and leisure activities. The Speech Therapist focuses on the acquisition of receptive and expressive language, articulation, organization of language, and pragmatics or social communication.

Other Therapeutic Services

The children in our Early Childhood classroom receive Art Therapy, Music Therapy and Adaptive Physical Education.

Parent Training

Staff in the Early Childhood classroom communicate and collaborate with each child's family on a regular basis. Home visits are scheduled on a monthly basis for staff to model newly acquired skills thus affording parents the opportunity to generalize them in the home environment.



For more information or to make a referral,

please call **Wendy Halloran at 262.569.5515 ext. 3001**, email whalloran@odtc.com or visit www.odtc.com

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