



## Pediatric Evaluation and Developmental Services

### The Relationship-Based Approach

The evaluation and intervention techniques offered by the PEDS team are based on the social, emotional, relationship and cognitive theories and techniques of Stanley Greenspan, Steven Gutstein, Albert Bandura, Lev Vygotsky, John Bowlby and Urie Brofenbrenner with

insights from others such as Katherine Nelson and John Muma. According to these experts, human development is influenced by culture and the strong social and emotional relationships between children and their families. Children learn through motivated and emotionally triggered interactions with their environment and by imitating and modeling the behaviors of peers and adults. As they develop a sense of self and self-esteem, children act upon their environment in purposeful and intentional ways. When supported by a responsive caregiver, children become highly engaged and involved in their environments and learning is enhanced.

Development can be disrupted, however, by genetic and biological differences, neurological and sensory dysfunction and lack of appropriate environmental stimulation. PEDS believes that children with developmental disorders, including those on the autism spectrum, can learn to engage socially with peers and adults if therapy is based on the stages of emotional development (as outlined by Greenspan) and social connections. Difficulties or delays in areas such as communication and language, sensory processing, social/emotional development, cognition and movement may also be addressed within this family and relationship-based framework.

#### Focus of evaluation and intervention techniques

- Addressing individual neurological and biological factors that may affect and delay development
- Enhancing a child's ability to attend, control their own behaviors and process sensory information
- Enhancing functional and emotional stages of development within everyday environments
- Enhancing the ability of the child to think flexibly and problem solve
- Promoting engaging and supportive environments that enhance development
- Connecting parents and children to foster attached and pleasurable relationships
- Empowering parents by providing the supports they need to be available, highly responsive and emotionally connected to their child's unique needs
- Enhancing access to community supports needed by parents and children



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