

While You Are Waiting.....

Whether you are committed to the RDI® Program for your family and are waiting for availability with an RDI® Program Certified Consultant, or are just curious about RDI® and would like to learn more about it before making a commitment, there are some key principles you should keep in mind. RDI® is a long term lifestyle commitment rather than a short term therapy approach. Therefore, before you begin a customized RDI® program and working with a RDI® Program Certified Consultant, you may want to practice some of the following suggestions.

Required prior to beginning supervision with an RDI® Program Certified Consultant:

1. Read *The RDI Book* by Dr. Steven Gutstein. PhD (available at www.rdiconnect.com).
2. View the DVD entitled *Going to the Heart of Autism: the Relationship Development Intervention Program* (available at www.rdiconnect.com) **or** attend 4-day parent training by the Connections Center, if available, (refer to www.rdiconnect.com for training schedule) **or** complete all of the basic e-learning courses online through the RDIos, available by subscription (ask for an invitation from any RDI consultant).

To learn more about RDI:

- Visit the Connections Center website at www.rdiconnect.com. You will get the latest program information, a list of RDI® Program Certified Consultants, and a calendar of events. You can also sign up for the Connections Center newsletter.
- The following materials are for purchase from the Connections Center website:
 1. *The RDI Book* by Dr. Steven Gutstein. PhD..
 2. *My Baby Can Dance: Stories of Autism, Asperger's and Success Through the Relationship Development Intervention® (RDI®)*.
 3. *Autism Asperger's: Solving the Relationship Puzzle* by Dr. Steven Gutstein. PhD.
 4. Dr. Gutstein's RDI® activity books: *Relationship Development Intervention with Children, Adolescents and Adults, Social and Emotional Development Activities for Asperger's Syndrome Autism and Relationship Development Intervention with Young Children: Social and Emotional Development Activities for Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, PDD and NLD*.
 5. The RDI training DVD entitled, *Going to the Heart of Autism: the Relationship Development Intervention Program* (available at www.rdiconnect.com).
- Subscribe to the RDIos, an online RDI learning program. This extensive learning system includes live and archived webinars, e-learning courses, a video library, all the parent and child learning objectives, and much more. You may subscribe to this program by contacting any RDI consultant and requesting an invitation.
- Attend a four-day parent training seminar if available. A current schedule of events is available at www.rdiconnect.com.

Tips for getting started:

- Sign up on a yahoo group for parents using RDI® (go to www.yahogroups.com. In the section entitled "Find a group", type in "RDI").
- Although co-occurring conditions (motor planning, sensory processing, arousal, behavior, dietary, and medications, etc.) do not necessarily mean you cannot start an RDI® home program, these conditions can be addressed while you are waiting.
- Simplify your family life, slow down and consider eliminating or decreasing some of the activities your child is currently participating in. Although RDI® can be integrated into everyday

routines; it also requires that you and your child are physically and emotionally available for consistent, intensive interactions.

- Get in the habit of videotaping your interactions with your child. Review videotapes and journal about what you are seeing. When you do work with an RDI® Program Certified Consultant you will be required to send in brief (3-5 minute) videotapes of your work. Getting the camera angles just right and feeling good about being on camera may take some time. Journaling about what you are seeing when you review the videos will give you a record of progress as well as being an excellent tool for adapting your program to your family’s specific strengths and needs.
- Try increasing your use of declarative (“experience sharing”) communication. Declarative communication engages the executive centers of the brain, invites further discussion or describes a concept, whereas imperative communication demands an answer or an action. It also brings the listener into your world, to share your perspective. Practicing this type of communication is preparation for the guided participation relationship (GPR). Your child needs to learn about how you are thinking, feeling and responding. This is valuable information for being able to benefit from your guidance on a daily basis. In order to help you understand the value of declaratives, use the examples given and practice with a partner. Notice the difference in responses you get from your partner.

Declaratives	Imperatives
<p>Wow that was the best story ever! These cookies sure smell good. I can hardly wait to hear all the details about your day! I’m not having fun. I’m ready to go now...I’m not sure if you are. Uh oh! Hmm, I wonder what color this is... That was fun! I’ve never seen such a big spider!</p>	<p>What did you like about the story? Which one do you want? What did you do at school today? Stop that. Put your shoes on. Pick up your toy. What color is this? Did you have fun? What kind of insect is that?</p>

- Prepare to be empowered! RDI® can help you to acquire newfound feelings of competence as parents. Healthy empowerment means changing the way you and your child respond to each other. RDI® is a model that relies on parent involvement with the parent leading in the role of guide, and the child assuming the role of the apprentice.
- Think about your long and short term goals for your child and your family. Be prepared to discuss those goals with the RDI® Program Certified Consultant.