

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 book, *Autism Asperger's: Solving the Relationship Puzzle* by Dr. Steven Gutstein. PhD.
2. View the DVD entitled *Going to the Heart of Autism: the Relationship Development Intervention Program* (available at www.rdiconnect.com) **or** attend a 2-day or 4-day parent training by the Connections Center (refer to www.rdiconnect.com for training schedule).

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, a calendar of two-day and four-day seminars and access to informative chat groups. You can also sign up for the Connections Center newsletter.
- The following materials are for purchase from the Connections Center website:
 1. *My Baby Can Dance: Stories of Autism, Asperger's and Success Through the Relationship Development Intervention® (RDI®)*.
 2. *Autism Asperger's: Solving the Relationship Puzzle* by Dr. Steven Gutstein. PhD.
 3. 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*.
 4. The RDI training DVD entitled, *Going to the Heart of Autism: the Relationship Development Intervention Program* (available at www.rdiconnect.com).
- Attend a two-day or four-day parent training seminar. 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").
- Read about the core deficits that are unique to Asperger's Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorders (<http://rdiconnect.com/archive/newsletters>).
- Generate "Mission Previews". These concrete, narrative goals should be written for short term (within the next two years), intermediate (within 5-7 years) and long term (more than 10 years from now). Develop a description for a specific future event, and describe what your lives will look like in the future. You can then use the narratives as a preview of your hopes and dreams for each goal period to help motivate you with a roadmap for future progress.
- Help your child overcome feelings of low self esteem by building feelings of competency.
 - Model while narrating as you solve a given problem ("Oh no! I can't find the blue crayon! Oh well... I can just use the green one.")

- Use declaratives to describe your child’s ability to solve a problem or help you to solve a problem. “ I bet you know how to put this together” or “That might be too tricky for me – maybe you should try it”
- Use indirect prompts to help your child reference you for help. “I know how we could fix it”.
- Emphasize how important your child’s role was in solving the problem: “Thanks to you another kid can play with this toy”.
- Find potential problems you can solve together: needing an object that isn’t available, searching for a missing object, moving heavy things, forgetting a step, building something, picking up a dropped object or cleaning up a spill.
- 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 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 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. In order to help you understand the value of declaratives, use the examples below and practice with a partner. Notice the difference in responses you get from your partner.

Declaratives	Imperatives
Wow that was the best story ever!	Pick that up.
I am so tired.	Which one do you want?
Watch out!	How was your day?
Here I come.	What did you do at school today?
I’ve never seen such a big frog.	Stop that.
Uh oh!	Look at me.
Those cookies sure smell good.	Say “thank you”
That was fun!	What color is this?
I’m not having fun.	Do your homework.
I really liked that movie.	Do you want to put your shoes on now?

- 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 master, 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.