

# Results of the International Scientific Practical Conference Innovations in Autism Interventions: Research and Practice of DIRFloortime®

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The purpose of the International Scientific-Practical Conference Innovations in Autism Interventions: Research and Practice of DIRFloortime® is to share the experience of helping children with ASD using the DIRFloortime® model. This article describes the conference results and its significance for dissemination of modern technologies and various approaches to helping children with autism in Russia: 425 professionals and parents from 32 constituent entities of the Russian Federation and 6 foreign countries took part in this conference, 357 of them received certificates confirming the DIR 101 course training.

**Keywords:** DIRFloortime®, autism spectrum disorders, technology, approach.

The conference was organized by the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE), Federal Resource Center for Organization of Comprehensive Support to Children with ASD (FRC), Interdisciplinary Council on Development & Learning, ICDL, USA. The partnership support was provided by the Our Future Foundation.

The opening of the conference took place on April 22. Welcoming remarks to the seminar participants were delivered by: Yu.M. Sachko, Head of the Department of Education for Students with Disabilities, Ministry of Educa-

tion of the Russian Federation; S.V. Alekhina, Vice-Rector for Inclusive Education, MSUPE; Jeffrey Guenzel, CEO, Interdisciplinary Council on Development & Learning (ICDL); Yu.A. Zhigulina, Executive Director of the Our Future Regional Social Program Foundation; A.L. Bitova, Director of the Center for Curative Education; I.V. Naidina, President of the Association of DIRFloortime Specialists in the Russian Federation; A.V. Khaustov, Director of the FRC, MSUPE.

Foreign and Russian DIRFloortime® experts addressed the issues that are important

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for understanding the specifics and possibilities of the approach in interventions for children with ASD:

– Understanding ASD from DIRFloortime® prospective.

– DIRFloortime® as an interdisciplinary model of working with children with ASD that includes fields such as occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, psychology and education.

– Specifics of the DIRFloortime® model with regards to working with children with ASD

– DIRFloortime® methodology: assessing individual characteristics of children with ASD.

– Types of developmental support for children with ASD within the DIRFloortime® approach.

– Types of support for children with behavioral challenges using the DIRFloortime® model.

– DIRFloortime® strategies within individual and small group situations.

The conference program was intensive and multi-format: lectures, workshops, discussions. Participants who attended the conference had different goals and expectations. Some specialists were interested in professional growth and wished to get acquainted with the possibilities of the approach that has been increasingly used in interventions for children with ASD, including in the Russian Federation. Some wanted to extend and improve their understanding of the DIRFloortime® approach after having received the information from expert practitioners, to get an opportunity to ask questions that arose after reading the materials about the approach in print sources or Internet resources. There were students among the participants, seeking to enrich their professional knowledge and get acquainted with new modern approaches that are used in different countries in the assistance system for children with ASD. There were specialists with many years of experience working with children with disabilities, including children with ASD.

The number of children with ASD is rapidly growing. The spectrum is large, with each

child having his unique characteristics, which encourages specialists to search for new effective practices that will help find an individual approach to each child, to successfully assist children and their families.

During the round table DIRFloortime® in the Spectrum of Developmental Approaches: Similarities, Differences, Perspectives of Cooperation, which opened the final day of the conference, participants were able to see how much there is in common between the Russian approaches: the emotional and semantic approach developed at the Institute of Corrective Pedagogy, the environmental approach used by the specialists of the Center for Curative Education, and the DIRFloortime® approach. First of all, these involve following the child's lead, focusing on individual characteristics, on engaging the family in the process, and the sequence of progress in the child's development. Perhaps, the similarity was one of the reasons for the high interest of specialists in this conference. It was important for all participants to find out what are the differences between these approaches and the advantages of each.

Russian approaches were presented by O.S. Nikolskaya and E.R. Baenskaya, Senior Research Associates of the Institute of Correctional Pedagogy of the Russian Academy of Education, and M.V. Yaremchuk and D.V. Bogolyubova-Kuznetsova, specialists of the Center for Curative Pedagogics of Moscow.

Four hundred twenty five participants from 32 constituent entities of the Russian Federation and 6 foreign countries (USA, Canada, Tunisia, Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan) attended the conference in Moscow to get acquainted with the experience of helping children with autism spectrum disorders using the DIRFloortime® model. The conference was attended by educational psychologists, speech pathologists, speech therapists, educators, teachers, tutors, social workers, parents raising children with ASD, students of relevant universities, heads of organizations.

The remarkable thing was that the participants who attended the full three days of the conference, and this is 357 individuals, received the certificates not only confirming their par-

ticipation in the conference, but also the training on the DIR 101 course, because the program presented at the conference is equivalent to the ICDL Institute (USA) course.

In fact, there were about 2,000 conference participants. The conference was livestreamed during three days, so that new interested participants could continuously join it. About 1,500 people watched the livestream in real time. In total, as of April 24, 3509 of 81 con-

stituent entities of the Russian Federation and 15 foreign states were registered wishing to participate in the conference remotely. Everyone who did not have an opportunity to join the event in real time could get acquainted with the conference materials using the links or viewing materials on the FRC website.

Details of the program and conference materials can be found on the FRC website: <https://autism-frc.ru/work/videos-etc/722> ■

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## **Итоги международной научно-практической конференции «Инновации в работе с детьми с расстройствами аутистического спектра: исследования и практика DIRFloortime®»**

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Цель Международной научно-практической конференции «Инновации в работе с детьми с расстройствами аутистического спектра: исследования и практика DIRFloortime®» — трансляция опыта оказания помощи детям с РАС с использованием модели DIRFloortime®. Описаны результаты конференции и ее значение для распространения современных технологий и различных подходов помощи детям с аутизмом в России: очное участие в конференции приняли 425 специалистов и родителей из 32 субъектов Российской Федерации и 6 иностранных государств, из них 357 человек получили сертификаты, подтверждающие обучение по курсу DIR 101.

**Ключевые слова:** DIRFloortime®, расстройства аутистического спектра, технологии, подход.

**Для цитаты:**

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