

Relationship Development Intervention®
An RDI® Certified Consultant and RDI® father talks
about RDI® Lifestyle



To me, Lifestyle means more than taking a planned time or an unexpected moment during the day to work on a particular RDI objective. If you can do that, that's great. But it also means, I feel, to improve the general quality of interaction with your child, all day long, even if there are no "specific" objectives.

This can include:

- * Parents slowing down, relaxing, and trying to spend more quality time with their child.
- * using more declarative communication all day (not waiting til the camera is on and you are "doing RDI")
- * For children who need it (those at earlier stages, especially), emphasizing nonverbal communication throughout the day.
- * allowing more "wait time" for a child to respond (including nonverbal as well as verbal responses)
- * incorporating productive uncertainty into daily interactions.
- * incorporating relative thinking, good enough solutions, flexible thinking, all day long, to the extent that the child is developmentally ready for it, and at their level, regardless of their RDI stage.
- * developing a trust relationship with the child.
- * sharing your emotions and feelings, and pointing interesting things out to the child.
- * focus on ways to help their child feel competent. (Such as, shared celebrations, giving them appropriate challenges, etc).

Most of these are "everyday life" kinds of things, you don't need to do a particular activity or even be working on a particular objective in order to do this. Of course, at some point, specific objectives do need to be worked on. But what I'm saying, as a kind of "background" to more focused work, the things mentioned above can improve the relationship between parent and child, help the child relax and be more connected.

To me this is all part of RDI lifestyle. Yes, you can also plan this to some extent, and you can also take advantage of specific "teachable moments" - that is part of it too. But I think that once a parent learns about RDI and does this kind of thing during "framed/planned" time, they will naturally begin to change the way they relate to their child "all day." (By all day, I don't mean to imply that a parent is never going to be imperative, but really "as much as possible" or whenever practical...)

The first thing to realize is that "activities" are not as important as objectives, and the objectives are cognitive in nature, not behavioural. That is, what is important is what's going on in the child's mind: the memories they're creating, the thoughts they are thinking, how they are directing their attention, the insights and discoveries they are having. The outward "activity" is just a backdrop for what's more important.

Also, keep in mind also that just about any activity can be used to meet an objective. For example, if I said "play peek-a-boo", that would be meaningless advice unless you knew what to spotlight, how to frame the activity in order to work on a particular objective.

RDI® Program information copyright Steven Gutstein & Connections Center 2006-2008

RDI® Program information ©Copyright Steven Gutstein and the Connections Center 2008