

Conference by Dr Suzi Tortora **2 July 2012, 9am to 6pm, Rotterdam**

Families in motion: Understanding movement, gesture, and pre-verbal communication in young children in the context of the attachment relationship

Our moving bodies tell stories that speak of our experience. As current neuroscience is revealing, our embodied experiences play a significant role in how we develop and learn to relate to others. Based on this research describing the intricate relationship between the brain and body participants will gain a deeper understanding of the role multi-sensory learning plays in all levels of a young child's development, using a program developed by this presenter called *Ways of Seeing*. The focus of this relationship-based program emphasizes the primary significance of movement expression, nonverbal observation, and multi-sensory experience in building the attachment relationship through nonverbal and experientially-based engagement.

Nonverbal observational skills will be sharpened as participants learn how to organize and interpret the information observed to develop a program unique to each child and family using touch, rhythm, movement and body awareness techniques. Multi-sensory activities that capture the young child's interest become a tool for communication helping the child navigate the environment, and supporting relationships while enhancing self-expression.

Within the context of an infant-parent mental health perspective, attunement to early developmental, non- and preverbal cueing is an essential skill for caregivers and therapists alike. Attachment and attunement are multi-sensory and shared experiences. Through this professional training participants will learn how to become more sensitive receivers of these communications and better able to use observations, live and through videos, to help family members understand each other.

In the clinical setting a movement-inclusive model of infant-parent therapy enables the child to actively participate through her own evolving nonverbal and verbal communicative system. The initial goal is to broaden the child's social and communicative base by first helping the child experience her movements as communications, enabling exchange and interaction with others. In this method the therapist and parent enter into a physical dialogue with the child to develop a socially and emotionally supportive relationship as a way to gain insight into how the infant may be experiencing her world. Special attention is paid to those aspects of the experience that may be causing difficulties for the child.

GOAL OF TRAINING: Through lecture, video, worksheets and experiential participation, participants will understand the role of movement in development, be introduced to the D.A.N.C.E. nonverbal observational tool to analyze the parent-infant attachment relationship, and learn age appropriate playful spontaneous movement, dance and play activities that support the attachment relationship while enhancing physical, cognitive, communicative and social/emotional development.

How to apply this multi-sensory and nonverbal perspective across a continuum of infant mental health practice, from typical parent-infant relationships to special populations including: post partum depression, trauma, developmental delays, sensory processing disorder, communication delay, and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will be discussed. These activities can be used with families in individual, dyadic, group, therapeutic, wellness, preventative, clinical and daycare settings.