Serve & Return Interactions
What do we mean by serve & return?
What do we know for sure?

- Serve and return interactions shape the brain
- When you are sensitive and responsive to a young child’s signals and needs, you provide an environment rich in serve and return experiences
- Building the serve and return capabilities of adult caregivers can help strengthen the environment of relationships essential to children’s lifelong learning, health, and behavior.

How do brains develop?
Brainstem
- Fight or Flight
- Survival mechanisms (heart rate, breathing)
- Receives sensory information

Limbic System
- Emotion formation and processing
- Learning, memory, and relationships

Cerebellum
- Balance and coordination
- Movement

Cerebral Cortex
- Complex thought
- Reasoning, self-regulation, problem-solving
- Language
- Attention

The brain develops from the bottom up and the inside out.

Think of a house:
- Neocortex
- Limbic
- Cerebellum
- Brainstem
So, what happens if we don’t?

Because responsive relationships (serve and return) are both **expected** and **essential**, their absence is a serious threat to a child’s development and well-being.
"It is the qualities and nature of interactions between the adults and children that are responsible for the learning and development of those kids.

Dr. Bob Pianta

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How do we serve & return?
Serve & Return

1. Notice the child's serve and share his attention
2. Return the serve by supporting and encouraging
3. Give it a name!
4. Take turns...and wait
5. Practice endings and beginnings

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzMxrMJBZdQ
Notice the serve and share the child’s focus

// book reading //
Return the serve by supporting and encouraging

// pulling to stand //
Give it a name!

// exercising baby //
Take turns...and wait.

// baby conversation //
Practice Endings & Beginnings

// eating a cracker //
Let’s Review

serve and return in action
// Engaging with Babies & Toddlers //

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- things I learned that were new
- ways I am already doing serve & return
- things I am going to do differently
Consistent, nurturing relationships with caregivers early in life are the cornerstones of emotional and intellectual competence.

Stanley Greenspan

THANKS!
Any questions?
jennerkgerdes@gmail.com
402-366-2587

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