

Margaret Spellen

SWK 554

02/14/2023

Reflection #4

1-Identify and describe each of the 5 steps of the "serve and return" interaction. 2-Explain the significance of each step on brain development. 3-What are some concerns for children who don't have the opportunity to experience "serve and return" interactions. 4-What are some possible ways a social worker could intervene? 5-What policies could be implemented to help families with children at this stage? 6-What further research could be done to increase knowledge in this area?

The 5 steps of the "serve and return" interactions is the following:

1. **Share the Focus.** Whatever object the child points to, the caregiver is to follow that objective by pointing directly to that object, making eye contact, or mimicking the sound that child makes. Sharing the focus step helps build curiosity and strengthens relationship.
2. **Support and Encourage.** As the child plays with an object or engaged in an activity, you support the child's serve by words of encouragement or mimic the way the child moves, for example dance to music or bounce to a sound. This lets the child know that their thoughts and feeling are being understood.
3. **Name It.** Naming whatever the child points to or reaches for helps builds the brain. Whether it is an action, person, or thing, this builds the child's vocabulary.

4. **Take Turns back and Forth.** Taking turns helps the child learn self-control, and how to get along with others. Waiting is crucial and gives the child some time to respond. Returning the serve by asking questions and waiting to see what happens next. By waiting you give the child ideas and build confidence.
5. **Practice Endings and Beginnings.** Children signal when they're done and are ready to move on to a new activity. For example, a child walking away from a toy or letting it go, signals an ending with that toy, picking up a new toy signals beginning. This helps the child to take the lead. The caregiver supports the child by allowing them to explore the world.

Serve and Return interactions are crucial for brain development and the best could be done anytime, anywhere without toys or technology.

Children that don't have the opportunity to experience the serve and return interactions miss out on crucial brain development in learning, self-control, self-exploration, interacting with objects, language learning, interacting with others, and responding to their environment. Social workers can intervene by being mindful of the milestones, cognitive, gross-motor, and language, and asking if there is social support for the child. Provide resources to the family on providing a safe and stimulating environment, and how they can be more nurturing and responsive to their child's development.

Social workers could "advocate for policies that help delay the entry into childcare settings for paid parental leave so they can spend crucial one-on-one time early in their child's development." (Ashford, 2018 pg. 142). For further information, the Filming Interactions to

Nurture Development (FIND) Program offers information to help strengthen positive interactions between caregivers and children. This would be a great tool for a small groups of first time parents, daycare and pre-school workers.