Serve & Return
Challenging Serves

Filming Interactions to Nurture Development

Young children sometimes serve in ways that are challenging, like saying “no” or throwing tantrums. Your response can help your child learn important skills and reduce tough behaviors.

What are some challenging ways your child serves? Babies might pull hair or knock things off their highchair table. Toddlers and preschoolers might say “no”, grab toys from their sibling’s hand, or play roughly with the family pet.

How do you return those serves in ways that support your child and help them learn? If your child is upset, you might name how you think they’re feeling. You might calmly redirect your child by encouraging them to do the right thing (e.g. “Pet the kitty gently”) or distract them by turning their attention to something new (e.g. “Let’s go play outside”). Sometimes, the most helpful response is to not to return that particular serve at all.

How can you encourage the behaviors you’d like to see more of? Keep an eye out for moments when your child serves to do the right thing (e.g. plays nicely with her sibling or does what you ask him to do the first time) and return that serve with encouragement (e.g. a smile, a high-five or “nice job!”).

When you respond to challenging serves in a calm and supportive way, you help your child learn important skills like self-regulation. Talk with your Healthy Steps Specialist to learn about managing tough behaviors.

Website: https://www.thefindprogram.org/