

## Serve and Return Interactions

Serve and return is one of the most important forms of child and guardian interaction. It's based on analogy from games like tennis and volleyball. Serve and Return happens when young children instinctively reach out for interaction, through babbling, facial expressions, words, gestures, cries, etc. and adults respond by getting in sync and doing the same kind of babbling, gesturing, and so forth. By providing positive feedback via eye contact, sound, words, and physical interaction, the adult helps spark the child's interest and enthusiasm in practicing things like speech, language and social learning. Without active serve and return engagement, children can lose interest in these activities, potentially undermining the development of fundamental brain architecture.

When observing and writing CASA reports look for and describe these serve and return interactions. These are just some of the many things that can be a serve and return interaction. They are so important and a great way for CASA's to see the caregivers are engaged.

<b>Birth to 3 months</b>	
When the baby serves she	The serve is returned when the parent/caregiver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>looks at your face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>looks at her face and smiles while they are feeding and providing care</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cries and sucks on her hands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talks to her about how she's feeling (e.g., "You're hungry/wet/tired, aren't you?")</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>kicks her legs and bats at things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pushes gently upwards on her feet and let her push back against her hands. Dangle safe objects for her to bat when they are playing together.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes contented noises (e.g., coos, gurgles, sighs and squeals)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rubs, pat and gently touch her tummy, back, arms and legs. Stop to see what she does. She will let you know to stop or to do it again.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pays attention to your voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talks to her about what they are doing during the day. Notice whether she likes a gentle voice or a lively voice.</li> </ul>

<b>3-6 months</b>	
When the baby serves she	The serve is returned when the parent/caregiver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>looks at people, things and sounds that interest her</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>notices, talks about or gives her the things she is looking at</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tries to move while on her tummy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gets down on the floor and moves with her</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coos and gurgles with vowel sounds (e.g., <i>ee</i>, <i>ay</i>, <i>ey</i> and <i>ooh</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>copies the baby's sounds and actions. Then wait to see if she copies them.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>smiles at you when you talk and sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sings, talks and looks at books with the baby</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>laughs, giggles and shouts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>puffs their cheeks and sticks out their tongue. Wait to see if she copies them. Play peek-a-boo.</li> </ul>

## 6–9 months

When the baby serves he	The serve is returned when the parent/caregiver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• turns when he hears an interesting sound</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• draws attention to interesting sounds around you</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enjoys looking at objects, pictures and books</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• talks about pictures in a book</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reaches for things he wants</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• names what he is reaching for and says, "Do you want the ball?"</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• uses his voice to get your attention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lets him know you are there to help and asks him what he needs</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• copies what you do (e.g. claps hands, makes sounds)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sings nursery songs and plays finger games with actions</li></ul>

## 9–12 months

When the baby serves he	The serve is returned when the parent/caregiver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• looks at the things you point to</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• stops to look at things when you go for a walk—names the things you are pointing to</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• picks up, stacks and nests objects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fills a bottom drawer in your kitchen with plastic dishes and containers for him to explore</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bounces to music</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• plays music and sings songs with him</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• watches other children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• takes him to the park or library so he can be with other children of all ages</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• drops things from his high chair to see where they go</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• looks at him and ask, "Where did it go?" As they give it back to him, says, "Here it is."</li></ul>

## 12 to 18 months old

When the baby serves she	The serve is returned when the parent/caregiver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• builds and knocks down 2–4 block towers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• takes turns putting blocks on a tower—says "my turn" when they put their block on and "your turn" when she puts hers on</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• points to things that interest her</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• gives her choices—she may look or point to what she wants</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• starts pretending to feed dolls or stuffed animals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enjoys having a tea party with her stuffed animals (pretend to pour, stir and drink the 'tea')</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tries to do things on her own</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• takes time as often as she can to let her try to undress and feed herself</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• grabs things from others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• says, "Sarah was playing with that car. It's her turn right now. You can have a turn later"</li></ul>

## 18 months to 2 years old

When the toddler serves she	The serve is returned when the parent/caregiver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>likes simple games and rhymes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spends time saying rhymes and playing games she enjoys</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>puts the pieces in simple puzzles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>takes turns putting the pieces in a puzzle</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listens to simple stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lets her hold the book and turn the pages</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>points to pictures, body parts, objects and people that you name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reads lift-the-flap books and lets her find the pictures you name</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>kicks a ball while standing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rolls a ball gently for her to kick and take turns kicking it back and forth</li> </ul>

## 2 to 3 years old

When the toddler serves she	The serve is returned when the parent/caregiver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>jumps with both feet off the floor, pedals a tricycle and balances on 1 foot for a short time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spends lots of time playing outside together—takes turns copying each other, jump, run, sit, bend over and laugh together</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draws lines and circular scribbles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>scribbles and draws with the child</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talks in simple 2- to 3-word sentences that have lots of grammatical errors (e.g., "Poon fall down. Daddy gots it".)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>repeats back what you think your child said in a more correct way (e.g., "Your spoon fell on the floor. Daddy's got it".)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wants to keep on playing when it's time to eat, sleep or change activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gives her a 5-minute warning before any change in activity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pretends with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gets together with other families with young children</li> </ul>

## **Warning Signs**

*As a CASA we do not expect you to diagnose developmental delays. If, however, you notice the following behaviors please include the information, stated as observations in your report. In addition, add your observations to the concerns section of your report. Also, e-mail the DHS worker and GAL so they can review your observations and provide services that may be helpful. Early interventions for children make a huge impact on a happy and healthy life.*

Concerns should be noted if the child has any of the following signs at the age that's indicated.

### **Languages and Speech Delays**

By 3 to 4 Months

- Does not respond to loud noise
- Does not babble
- Begins babbling but does not try to imitate sounds (by 4 months)

By 7 Months

- Does not respond to sounds

By 1 Year

- Does not use any single words (like "mama")

By 2 Years

- Cannot speak at least 15 words
- Does not use two-word phrase without repetition; can only imitate speech
- Does not use speech to communicate more than immediate needs.

### **Vision Developmental Delays**

By 3 Months

- Does not follow moving objects with his or her eyes
- Does not notice hands (by 2 months)
- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
- Crosses eyes most of the time

By 6 Months

- Has one of both eyes turning in or out all the time
- Experience constant tearing or eye drainage
- Does not follow near objects (1 foot away) or far objects (6 feet away) with both eyes

### **Motor Skill Developmental Delays**

By 3 to 4 months

- Does not reach for, grasp, or hold objects
- Does not support his or her head well
- Does not bring objects to his or her mouth (4 months)
- Does not push down with legs when his or her feet are planted on a firm surface (4 months)

By 7 Months

- Has stiff and tight or very floppy muscles
- Flops his or her head when pulled into a sitting position

- Reaches with one hand only or does not actively reach for objects
- Has trouble getting objects to his or her mouth
- Doesn't roll over in either direction (by 6 months)
- Cannot sit up without help (by 6 months)
- Does not bear weight on his or her legs when you pull him or her up to a standing position

#### By 1 Year

- Does not crawl
- Drags one side of his or her body while crawling
- Cannot stand when supported

#### By 2 Years

- Cannot walk (18 months)
- Does not develop a heel-to-toe walking pattern or walks only on toes
- Cannot push a wheeled toy

### **Social or Emotional Delays**

#### By 3 Months

- Does not smile at people
- Does not pay attention to new faces, or seems frightened by them

#### By 7 Months

- Refuses to cuddle
- Show no affection for parents or caregivers
- Show no enjoyment around people
- Cannot be comforted at night (after 5 months)
- Does not laugh or squeal (by 6 months)
- Shows no interest in games of peek-a-boo (by 8 months)

#### By 1 Year

- Shows no back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or facial expressions (at 9 months)
- Shows no back-and-forth gestures, such as waving, reaching or pointing

### **Cognitive Delays**

#### By 1 Year

- Does not search for objects that are hidden while he or she watches
- Does not use gestures, such as waving
- Does not point to objects or pictures

#### By 2 Years

- Does not know the function of common objects, such as a hairbrush, telephone, or spoon
- Does not follow simple instructions