



Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation

The Institute for Family Violence Studies

Florida State University

JUNE EPRESS

QUESTIONS FROM DIRECTORS

In the Protective Factor training, can you explain how we can prove that we are providing our clients with all this information?

Yes – there’s a form for that! In every visit, in intake, and when a visit ends, parents can receive important information about the Protective Factors. The program staff document what information was given to parents in a separate form that goes in the case file. For a copy of that form, please contact Karen at koehme@fsu.edu

Is there a good resource you recommend online for our clients to learn about water safety?

Yes! DCF has created wonderful resources that you can download. Go here: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/water-safety-tips>

We recommend that every parent should receive information about water safety. It’s easy and free, and it saves lives.

You can get free fliers in English AND in Spanish!

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childwelfare/water-safety/FlierEyes.pdf>



In addition, there are short videos here:

<https://www.poolsafely.gov/>

In the last phone conference, you provided a training on Safe Sleep. Do you have a one-page handout we can give to our clients?

Yes, we are working on that, as promised. It will be included in the Agenda for the June Phone Conference. Stay tuned! Meanwhile, feel free to use the resources of the Ounce of Prevention. Go here:

https://www.ounce.org/pdfs/safe_sleep.pdf

https://www.ounce.org/pdfs/safe_sleep_printAd.pdf

There are high quality brochures on how to create a sleep routine here:

https://www.ounce.org/pdfs/better_sleep.pdf

Encouraging Children to be Physically Active

By Elena Simonsen

Introduction

With the rise in use of technology and social media over the past decade or so, it has become more common to see children on their cell phones or watching television rather than playing outdoors with friends. Being sedentary has been linked with several negative health outcomes, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Therefore, it is important for parents and supervised visitation monitors to encourage children to limit the amount of time that they spend in front of a screen, and get active!

Objectives

Inform parents and visit monitors about:

- Why being physically active is important for children, and how it can benefit them
- How they can help children get the physical activity that their bodies need

The Benefits of Physical Activity

Being physically active benefits children physically, mentally, and emotionally. Knowing how exercise can benefit children, parents and visit monitors can better understand the importance of exercise for children, and how they can help to enhance these benefits.

Physical Benefits

During exercise, hormones called *endorphins* are produced. Endorphins can help to decrease pain, which may be especially helpful for teenage girls experiencing premenstrual syndrome, as the endorphins produced by exercise can help to alleviate some of the symptoms of PMS.

Additionally, exercise has been linked to:

- Strong bones and muscles
- Decreased risk of being overweight
- Decreased risk of developing diabetes
- Decreased blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Decreased risk of heart disease
- Decreased risk of developing cancer
- Better sleep quality



Mental Benefits

Exercise can help promote brain growth and development. Increased exercise has been linked to an increase in the size of the hippocampus, an area of the brain that is involved in memory and learning. Exercise also leads the body to release growth factors, which are chemicals that help brain cells and blood vessels in the brain to grow and thrive.

Exercise also helps children develop better motor skills, enhances their thinking and problem solving skills, and improves attention spans. All of these skills may help children to perform better in school.

Emotional Benefits

In addition to decreasing physical pain, the endorphins released during exercise can also improve children's moods. Thus, it makes sense that exercise can be helpful in improving children's mental health of. Exercise can:

- Decrease stress
- Decrease anxiety
- Increase positive thinking
- Increase self-confidence and self-esteem
- Improve relationships (especially through participation in team sports)
- Improve body image

Ways to Encourage Children to be Active

Knowing the benefits of physical activity, parents and visit monitors may be wondering how they can encourage children to get the exercise that their bodies need. There are many different ways children can get the recommended sixty minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day, including playing sports, riding bike, and going for a walk. Children should engage in a variety of types of exercise. Three main areas of exercise that children should engage in are aerobics (such as running, walking, and jumping), strength (such as push-ups and sit-ups), and flexibility (such as toe touches, arm stretches).

Some age-specific activity guidelines from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) can be found in the chart below:



Age	Minimum Daily Activity	Examples
Infants	No specific requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage motor development
Toddler	1½ hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage motor development
Preschoolers	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kicking or throwing a ball • tag • follow the leader • freeze dance • riding a bike • obstacle courses
School age Children	1 hour or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sports like basketball or martial arts • biking • hiking
Teenagers	1 hour or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school sports • yoga • skateboarding

To help motivate children to be more active, parents and visit monitors can:

- help children to choose activities that are age appropriate
- give children many opportunities to be active
- provide children with the equipment they need for sports and other activities
- take children to a playground or park
- sign children up for community sports leagues
- establish a regular exercise schedule
- model healthy amounts of physical activity
- keep the focus on having FUN!

While it is very important for children to be physically active, it is also possible for children to be *too* active. Parents and visit monitors should remain vigilant and watch out for children that may exercise compulsively. These children may feel anxious if they can't work out, be overly focused on body image, and miss out on social activities in order to exercise. Compulsive exercise can place excessive stress on the body and increase their levels of anxiety and stress. Teenage girls are most likely to develop compulsive exercise behaviors. It is important for parents to be good role models with regards to exercise and body image in order to help prevent and combat compulsive exercise in children.

Conclusion

Physical activity should be an essential part of children's days. Federal guidelines suggest that children get at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. Remaining active provides many benefits for children, and can positively impact their bodies, minds, and emotions. Parents and supervised visitation monitors can help children to be more active and thus experience the wonderful benefits of exercise!

Resources

- A plethora of resources for raising healthy, active children can be found here:
<https://medlineplus.gov/exerciseforchildren.html>

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The Serve and Return Response

By Elena Simonsen

Introduction

The Clearinghouse has been training providers on the Serve and Return Response for over a year. Here is a written description for parents.

The first few years of a child's life are crucial to

brain development and growth. During these first few years, connections in children's brains begin to form as they interact with others and have new experiences. Parents and supervised visitation monitors can help aid in this process of brain and growth development through engaging in what is known as the **serve and return response**.

Objectives

After reading this article, parents and supervised visitation monitors will know:

- What the serve and return response is
- How using the serve and return response is beneficial to children
- Some examples of the use of the serve and return response in everyday life

What is the Serve and Return Response?

The serve and return response occurs when an adult appropriately responds to a child. The serve and return response is a back-and-forth experience, requiring active participation of both adult and child. It may be helpful to think of this interaction as similar to a game of tennis. The child “serves” by reaching out to the adult in some way, whether that be by babbling, smiling, giggling, or gesturing. The adult should then “return” the child’s interaction by speaking, smiling, or laughing. Adults should be sensitive and responsive towards children in order to encourage these interactions.

Why is the Serve and Return Response Important?

When an adult appropriately returns a child’s “serve”, connections in that child’s brain are strengthened, helping the child to learn social skills and communication. These types of interactions can also help children to:

- learn to control their emotions
- deal with stress in a healthy way
- develop self-confidence
- learn the difference between what is right and what is wrong
- develop relationships with others
- learn to be compassionate towards others

Without these types of interactions, a child’s brain development may be impaired. A lack of serve and return interactions activates children’s stress response systems, causing them to feel distressed. Some barriers to using the serve and return response include:

- *Technology*
- *Caregiver stress*
- *Financial difficulties*
- *Lack of social support*
- *Health issues*

Examples of the Serve and Return Response



What does the serve and return response look like when put into action? Here are some examples by age:

Examples of The Serve and Return Response With Your Infant	
Serve	Return
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby babbles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent coos and smiles at baby
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby watches parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent narrates what they are doing

The Serve and Return Response With Your Toddler		
	Serve	Return
12-18 Months Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddler takes items from other people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent says, “Joe was playing with that right now. You can have a turn when he’s done”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddler points to something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent responds with the name of the item
18 Months- 2 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddler kicks or rolls a ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent kicks or rolls the ball back, and then each takes a turn kicking or rolling it back and forth
2-3 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddler plays pretend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent plays along with him or her



You may notice that as children get older, the interactions involved in the serve and return response grow more complex. Returning serves isn't very difficult and can be done in a variety of ways. The most important thing is that the adult being served to responds and actively engages with the serving child.

Conclusion

The serve and return response is important to the growth and development of a young child's brain. In this type of interaction, a child will reach out to an adult, and the adult will need to respond in an appropriate manner. There are many different ways that these types of responses can occur. It is important for parents and supervised visitation monitors to be aware of what these interactions are and how to respond appropriately in order to promote the healthy growth and development of children.

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