

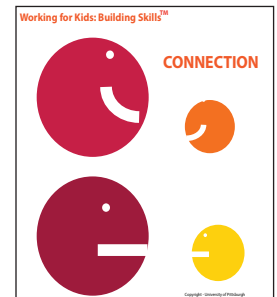
WORKING FOR KIDS building skills

Training Module 5: *Ways to Interact with Kids*

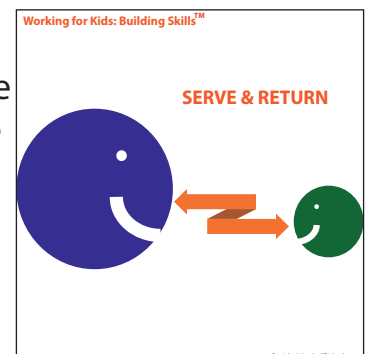
Key Points:

This module reviews four ways of interacting with children that support sturdy brain development. This discussion is adapted and reprinted with permission from simpleinteractions.org.

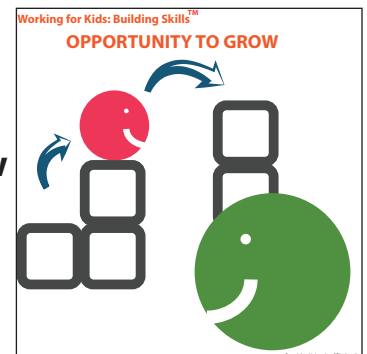
- One of the most gratifying parts of a relationship is feeling like someone “gets you”. Emotionally **connecting** with a child involves recognizing what a child is feeling and then returning that emotion. For example, if a child is frustrated, name that emotion (frustration) and ask why they are frustrated? Caring adults show they recognize a child’s emotions and want to help the child understand their emotion and what to do about it.



- To encourage learning, it is important that a child be allowed to serve and show what they are interested in, then the adult returns the serve recognizing what the child is interested in. **Serve & return** starts when an adult successfully pays attention to a child and then returns with words and actions so the child knows the adult is paying attention to them. Through serve & return interactions children learn that relationships are built on the give and take between people.



- How can we help our children tackle challenges they can conquer? If challenges are too difficult, children will become discouraged and eventually stop trying. If challenges are too easy children won’t be engaged and keep learning. Giving children the **opportunity to grow** involves allowing children to develop self-confidence as they master skills while offering support and encouragement. As a child learns new skills don’t focus on helping the child finish the task quickly, but focus on supporting and encouraging them to learn the skill on their own. Provide plenty of positive feedback when they succeed.



- When more than one child is present inviting **participation** of all children, especially those who are least likely or least able to participate is the role of caring adults. A good way to seamlessly include a child who is reticent to join a group activity is to suggest games and activities that showcase that child’s skills and interests. Learning to play together strengthens social and emotional brain pathways.

