



EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

MOVING LIVES FORWARD

SERVE AND RETURN

In the sporting world we know that tennis or volleyball uses the term 'serve and return.' This is when a team player serves the ball to the other team and they are expected to hit the ball back to the other team. The game continues with many more serves and returns from each side. So, what does this "game" have to do with early childhood or with children in general? We in the ECE world use 'serve and return' in many different areas and topics, but overall it has the same general concept of the sport term for of serve and return.

Children learn acceptance and being valued at birth. They cry, (serve) you feed, change, or cuddle them (return.). They learn expectations and you learn to read their cues. As they get older they babble you respond, they venture to explore you praise them and encourage them. You support their emotional dysregulations with redirection and support. This is the "game" of serve and return.

So, what happens if the child serves and gets no return? They cry and they do not get a bottle? What if they explore and are unsure of what to do and no one is there to help direct or lead them? What happens if they get emotional and no one can be there to help them regulate? The child learns to be withdrawn and will not seek out assistance or support. They learn the world is unsafe; they have no one they are attached to. They have no cheering section. Children learn not to even ask or they just continue to do things without knowing what might happen. All this leads to struggles and issues as adults and issues too.

It is okay to drop the ball or miss a return because we are all human and cannot play or best game all the time. What matters is that we keep on trying and we keep on being there to cheer our children on. What the child need to know is that you are there and that you will meet their needs and help them through the challenges they face.

Sometimes parenting is the art of being good enough for just that day. Practice makes us better and tomorrow will be better. There are days when we need to seek out help and support; allowing ourselves to be stronger for next punches. Child rearing does not require perfection.

It is a serve and return dance that everyone has to learn, if a child is to feel attached and

secure. Remember, all great accomplishments took practice and persistence.



Quote of the Week

"No one is ever quite ready; everyone is always caught off guard. Parenthood chooses you. And you open your eyes, look at what you've got, say "Oh, my gosh," and recognize that of all the balls there ever were, this is the one you should NOT drop. It's not a question of choice."
(Marisa de los Santos)

MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



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Ages 0-5

Covers the following counties:
Logan, Morgan

LAUNCHING ZOOM SECURE TELEHEALTH SERVICES!

Our ECMH team is excited to announce that consultation services are now available using Zoom Secure Telehealth Services. These services are available to client families, schools, childcare centers and community partners with group and individual meetings available. All services will be provided using this private, secure video platform, and can be accessed using most electronic devices. For more information or to set up a consultation appointment, please contact our ECMH team or your local Centennial Mental Health Center office.



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Ages 0-8

Covers the following counties:
Morgan, Washington
& Yuma

For additional support during the COVID-19 Pandemic you can call Centennial's **COMMUNITY SUPPORT LINE**

You can do this by calling your
nearest Centennial office:

Akron - 970.345.2254
Burlington - 719.346.8183
Cheyenne Wells - 719.346.8183
Elizabeth - 303.646.4519
Fort Morgan - 970.867.4924
Holyoke - 970.854.2114
Julesburg - 970.474.3769
Limon - 719.775.2313
Sterling - 970.522.4392
Wray - 970.332.3133
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Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick



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Ages Prenatal-5

Covers Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson,
Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips,
Sedgwick, Washington & Yuma Counties

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