

## Three and four year olds: serve-and-return activities

As children enter their preschool years, they know what they like and dislike. Their emotions tend to be more stable and predictable. As they understand their emotions better, they may start telling you their feelings and opinions. You may notice your preschooler:

- loves to imitate, sing, recite rhymes and have fun with words
- has a great imagination and sometimes has trouble understanding the difference between what's real and what's pretend
- has become more skilled and coordinated in their movements

Brain cell connections become stronger when you and your preschooler engage in serve-and-return interactions. Here are some examples of what this might look like with your preschooler.

### Activities

#### Curious george

**Your preschooler serves when they:**

- Ask "Why"

**You return their serve when you:**

- Talk to them about how things work and ask them what they think.



Preschoolers are very curious. They may ask "who," "where," "why" and "when" questions to learn more about their world. You can help them understand the information you share with them by responding to their questions.

- They ask "Why?" because they want to know how things work. They need you to patiently show and tell them.
- They ask "When?" because they're learning about time. Soon they'll understand that supper is 'later' and that you're going to the library 'tomorrow.'

#### Feelings book

**Your preschooler serves when they:**

- Name some of their feelings and notice how other people are feeling

**You return their serve when you:**

- Talk about how characters in a story or how the people in your child's life are feeling



Create a book of feeling words. Together, draw or cut and paste pictures of faces on paper showing different emotions. Write the emotion you think they are feeling beside the face. Remind your child that you can often tell how someone is feeling by looking at their face and body (e.g., smile, frown). Look at the pictures and words together and ask your child questions about what they see (e.g., "What do you think that person is feeling?").

#### Rhyme time

**Your preschooler serves when they:**

- Enjoy rhymes and start to make their own, such as "hat-cat"

**You return their serve when you:**

- Have fun making rhymes together



Say a word and see if they can find one that rhymes. Give them time to answer and try not to rush them.