

GROWING HEALTHY FUTURES

World Video Premiere!

[How-to: 5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return](#)



Serve and return interactions are fun, easy, and an excellent way to build a strong foundation in a child's brain for future learning and development. Is a child pointing at something? Babbling or moving those little arms and legs? That's a serve! They are giving you a signal. By returning a serve with a simple acknowledgement or smile, you are rewarding a child's interest and curiosity.

Serve and Return is part of responsive caregiving and an important skill that WIC staff can model to promote responsive feeding. You can use this video as a tool to help parents learn how to use serve and return as a part of their daily interactions with children. Check out this new, practical, how-to [video](#) from Harvard's Center on the Developing Child that shows adults and children serving and returning.

[Watch the video](#)

Learn the 5 steps of Serve and Return

1. Share the focus
2. Support and encourage
3. Name it!
4. Take turns, back and forth
5. Practice endings and beginnings

Reading with toddlers reduces harsh parenting, enhances child behavior

From the CalWICA e-newsletter

Parents who regularly read with their toddlers are less likely to engage in harsh parenting and the children are less likely to be hyperactive or disruptive, [a Rutgers led study](#) finds. Previous studies have shown that frequent shared reading prepares children for school by building language, literacy and emotional skills, but the study by Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School researchers may be the first to focus on how shared reading affects parenting. The study reviewed data on 2,165 mother-child pairs from 20 large U.S. cities, and found that frequent shared reading at age 1 was associated with less harsh parenting at age 3, and frequent shared reading at age 3 was associated with less harsh parenting at age 5. Mothers who read frequently with their children also reported fewer disruptive behaviors from their children, which may partially explain the reduction in harsh parenting behaviors.



I'm Glad You Asked!



Do breastfed babies taste different flavors in breast milk, depending on the mother's diet? Will this exposure help them to like a wider variety of foods when they are older?

The answer to these questions appears to be yes! There have been some recent studies on this fascinating topic, and limited scientific research shows that the diet of a woman during both pregnancy and lactation may positively influence her child's later food acceptance. You can read more [here](#). WIC encourages women to eat a variety of fresh and flavorful foods. This is important for nutritional reasons and may also help her child to better accept a wider range of foods. Foods with strong flavors, like vanilla, ginger, carrot and garlic, affect the flavor of breastmilk, and some research shows that babies like the flavored milk. Pretty cool! Other studies suggest that children who breastfeed are less likely to reject foods that their mother ate while breastfeeding. [This article](#) by Dr. Gwen Dewar provides some great information about flavors and breast milk.

Bottom line: The science suggests that moms who eat foods with strong flavors may help their infants to better accept new foods. Of course, the family eating pattern and environment also help to shape these preferences, so consuming a healthy diet during pregnancy and breastfeeding is a great way to get the family off to a good start nutritionally.

Shopping Tip



Coupons, Discounts and eWIC...oh my!

Using coupons, discounts, and store loyalty cards with WIC is allowed and encouraged. It can be a little complicated so it helps to be aware of some of the issues WIC shoppers could experience while using them.

It's important for shoppers to read the fine print on coupons advertising deals like "Buy 5 juices get 3 free." These types of deals are sometimes actually "Buy 5 juices and get them all at a reduced price" and then the price reduction results in a savings equal to the price of three juices.

Discounts such as employee discounts or "\$20 off your entire purchase" are more beneficial to the WIC shopper if they are applied after eWIC is tendered.

Shoppers should use BottleDrop or Coinstar balances to pay for part of their purchase, after tendering eWIC.

One very popular promotion promises a \$20 gift card for every \$100 spent on baby products. This is a great deal. However, it often causes the store POS system to crash when used in conjunction with the eWIC card. Caution WIC participants who use this promotion! If the system crashes, remind them to check their benefit balance and if the benefits are gone, the transaction went through and they should politely insist on receiving the foods.



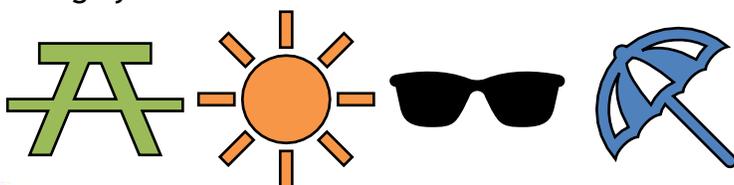
A component of the National WIC Association's 2019 campaign is digital influencers. MomSquad is a social advocacy program just for moms. A community of socially active and connected consumers serving as micro-influencers for brands through customized missions. The MomSquad Forum is a positive, safe environment to connect with other moms about ... just about anything! From postpartum questions to breastfeeding advice, the Forum is an outlet to share your story, support other moms, and seek advice from your peers in the same key life stage.

If this sounds like you, your WIC staff, or a WIC participant, you can join the WIC squad by [signing up here](#). You'll enjoy free products, fun giveaways, and the opportunity to speak about WIC.

Fill your picnic basket with food safety

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service recently provided these suggestions to keep picnics safe this summer. How can you share them with WIC participants?

- If running water isn't available, bring soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer or moist towelettes to keep your hands clean.
- Avoid cross contamination. Don't put cooked food on a plate that once had raw meat.
- Bring a couple of coolers filled with ice - one for perishable food and one for drinks.
- Only bring the amount of food you will eat at the picnic. If you have leftovers, don't leave them outdoors for more than 2 hours.
- If you are grilling meat, make sure it gets cooked thoroughly.



Online option for submitting complaints

Most specific complaints you receive from participants or vendors are entered into TWIST.

But sometimes you have someone from the general public complain to you about the WIC program in general. There is a link at the bottom of the state WIC program home page that says "[Report a complaint, fraud or abuse](#)."

The general public can use this page to file any kind of complaint. This can be especially helpful for folks that want to remain anonymous or to control what is in the complaint. Just remember that anonymous complaints are difficult to investigate.

You can refer people to our online [complaint form](#) which goes directly to the state office. On the same webpage are complaint forms that can be downloaded and mailed to the state. These forms are available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Russian](#), or [Chinese](#).

Progress note or complaint?



Sometimes participant behavior warrants a complaint in TWIST, especially if the behavior violates the safety or civil rights of WIC staff. It is also helpful to put in a complaint each time it happens, rather than just one complaint. You can copy progress notes about the behavior and paste them in a TWIST complaint.

Contact [Erin Macauley](#) if you have questions.