

# MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

**Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF):**

## Communicating

Communicating is much more than understanding language, speaking, reading and writing. It is the skill of **determining what you want to communicate** and **realizing how our communications will be understood by others**. It is the skill that teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.

### Suggestions for Promoting Communicating for Ages 6-8

#### Tip:

Show your child each of the Chinese symbols, asking your child to guess what it represents.

#### Skill:

Helping your child understand how **symbols can represent words** is an important aspect of understanding how people communicate. The back and forth conversation you have with your child about this book is what researchers call **“serve and return.”** Like a game of ball, one of you says or does something (serves) and the other responds (returns). The importance of these everyday interactions to brain building is a key finding from child development research.

#### Tip:

In Chinese, some symbols go together to create words. For example, the word “good” comes from the symbol of a woman and a child together. Talk with your child about words in your own language that come from putting other words together (in English “breakfast” comes from breaking the fast—or not eating during the night before).

Ask your child:

- “Can you think of words that have been created by putting words together?”

#### Skill:

Sharing information about how **language has been created to express ideas** helps your child learn to think about Communicating in new ways. To think about language in this way helps your child pay attention to the details of the words he or she uses on an everyday basis, which calls on **Executive Function** skills.

#### Tip:

Ask your child to draw pictures that represent things in his or her life.

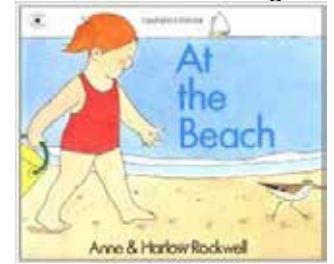
#### Skill:

When your child practices expressing himself or herself through pictures or through words, your child is increasing his or her ability to communicate.

## At the Beach

By Anne Rockwell

A boy and his mother go to the beach where she teaches him how to draw Chinese words in the sand by showing him how the words look like pictures of what they represent. A charming portrayal of the connections between written words and their meanings.



High-quality books and educational resources from First Book supporting research-based Life Skills from *Mind in the Making* by Ellen Galinsky



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You will notice that these tips promote two child development principles: **Serve and Return** and **Executive Function** skills.

**Serve and Return**, like a game of ball, involves a back and forth conversation between you and your child where you listen, then build on and extend what your child says or does to promote learning.

**Executive Function** skills are skills you use to manage your attention, your feelings, your thoughts and your behavior to reach your goals.

They include being able to pay attention, remember information, think flexibly and exercise self control.

Find more about *Mind in the Making* at [www.mindinthemaking.org](http://www.mindinthemaking.org).