

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 Infants and Toddlers

TIP:

When the book says: “Where are baby’s toes?” you can point to your baby’s toes, as well as to the babies’ toes in the pictures on the pages.

SKILL:

Communicating centers on conversations—with sounds, with words, with movements and with facial expressions. This book provides an ideal opportunity to have many conversations with your baby.

The best conversations involve what researchers call “**serve and return**”—you or your child does something (serves) and the other responds (returns), back and forth like a game of ball. Use this book to watch your child’s response to the words and pictures and build on what your child says (with sounds, with looks, with movements) and extend it. If your baby says, “Aaahh,” you can say, “Aaahh” back. This is a vitally important brain-building activity.

TIP:

While you read this book with your child, you can follow the actions (“so big” and “patty-cake,” for example).

SKILL:

Using the words and repeating the actions on the pages help children connect words to real experience and promote the skill of Communicating. It is a step toward determining what you want to say, an **Executive Function** skill.

Baby! Talk!

By Penny Gentieu

A diverse cast of babies appears on each photo-filled page of this board book. Very young children will love imitating the babies’ actions, as they clap hands, play peek-a-boo and more, while practicing favorite baby expressions like “Uh-oh!”



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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.