

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:

Talk with your child about how different Emma Lazarus' life was from the immigrants who came to the United States—they were sick, hungry and very poor, yet hoping for a better life.

Ask your child:

- “Why do you think that Emma was drawn to the immigrants?”
- “Why did others not care and think these people would ruin our country?”

Skill:

When you have conversations about characters in books, you are helping your child **understand the perspectives of others**, which is a very important aspect of learning to communicate well with others.

Tip:

Emma used her ability as a writer to try to change other people's views about immigrants. Talk with your child about how Emma's words have made a difference over time. Ask your child if she or he has ever read something that changed his or her views.

Skill:

The essence of Communicating is **sharing your own point of view in ways that affect others' feelings and thoughts**. The back and forth conversation you have with your child about this issue 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.

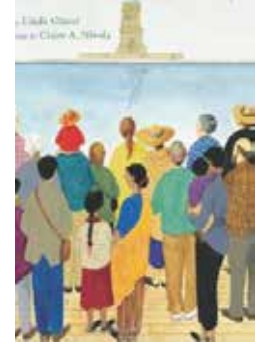
Tip:

When Emma prepared to write the poem, she put herself in the “shoes” of the immigrants and even of the Statue of Liberty. She asked herself: What if the statue was a real woman? What might she think and feel if she saw the immigrants “arriving hungry and in rags?”

Emma's Poem

By Linda Glaser

Emma's Poem is the compassionate and inspiring story behind the famous poem engraved on a plaque at the entrance to the Statue of Liberty.



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



Find more books and materials on the First Book Marketplace, a resource available exclusively to educators and programs serving children in need. www.fbmarketplace.org.

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.

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Tip: (continued)

Ask your child to talk about the questions that Emma was asking herself.

- “What might the immigrants be thinking and feeling when they arrived in this country?”
- “If the statue was a real woman, what might she say?”

Skill:

Communicating includes **stepping back from our own thoughts and feelings** and **thinking about those we want to communicate with**, which call on **Executive Function** skills. Asking questions helps your child practice this skill.

Tip:

At the end of the book, there are stories about the author and the artist. Both have had immigrant experiences in their families. Ask your child if he or she thinks these experiences made a difference in the book they created.

Skill:

Sharing the background of this book helps your child understand that **books are written from the experiences and the passions of the author and artist**.

Tip:

Write a poem or make up a story with your child about something that is important to him or her. You can talk about whom your child hopes will read this poem or story and how it will affect them.

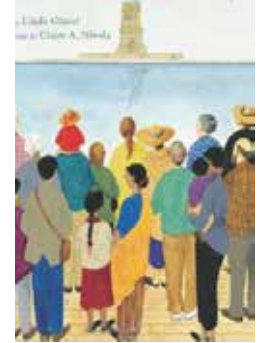
Skill:

There are many ways to communicate; writing poems and telling stories are beautiful ways to convey messages.

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