

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:

This book provides an opportunity to have your child listen to what the animals in the book say.



Ask your child:

- “What do cows say? What do sheep say? What do pigs say in this book?”

If your child says, “La La La,” you can ask what pigs really say.



SKILL:

Communicating involves **listening to what others say**.

TIP:



Children appreciate a sense of humor. See how your child reacts to the three singing pigs saying, “La La La!” Keep the joke going and ask your child to make up other silly things that animals might say.



SKILL:

As your child gets older and if she or he wants to pretend or make jokes about what animals say, enjoy the **humor**.



TIP:

You use this story to begin a conversation with your child about what your child wants to say. When your child is younger, repeat the sounds your child makes. When your child is older, you can ask:



- “What do you say when you are hungry? What do you say when you want me to pick you up?”

SKILL:

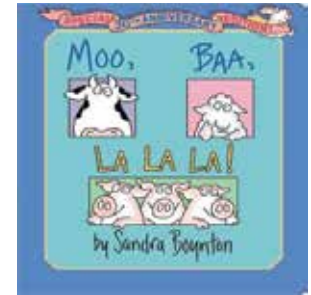
Communicating involves **thinking about what you want to say**. Use what child development researchers call “**serve and return**” to have this conversation—you or your child does something (serves) and the other responds (returns), back and forth like a game of ball. Watch your child’s response to the book and your questions and build on what your child says (with sounds, with looks, with movements) and extend it. If your baby makes a noise like, “bbbbbb,” you can say, “bbbbbb” back. When your child uses words, continue the conversation. This is a vitally important brain-building activity.



Moo, Baa, La La La!

By Sandra Boynton

This rhyming romp is a favorite of countless families. As expressive barnyard animals make the wrong sounds, children delight in correcting them. Along the way, they’ll quack, moo, neigh, baa, meow and giggle!



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.