

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 9-12

Tip:

No Talking is based upon Dave's learning about Gandhi's experience of not talking one day a week to "bring order to his mind."

Ask your child:

- "How did not talking affect the children's thinking and learning? What are some specific examples of this?"
- "How did not talking affect the teachers' thinking and learning, especially the Principal, Mrs. Hiatt?"
- "If you were Mr. Burton and writing a paper on this experiment for a human development class, what would you write about? What would you conclude from this experiment?"

Skill:

Communicating includes being able to **reflect about what you want to communicate**. By talking with your child about what the children and adults learned, you are helping your child reflect on his or her experiences with this book. This back and forth interaction 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 they couldn't talk as they usually did and had to stick to a three-word limit, Dave, Lynsey and their classmates learned to use many new ways of Communicating. Ask your child how the children communicated without using words. You can talk about all of the different ways we communicate—such as by using facial expressions, body movements and signals. Ask your child why these are important.

No Talking

By Andrew Clements

The fifth graders at Lakewood Elementary School are so noisy that they are known as "The Unshushables." When Dave learns that Mahatma Gandhi practiced silence one day a week to bring order to his mind, it triggers a clever two-day, no-talking contest between the boys and girls that results in many lessons learned for all.



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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Suggestions for Promoting Communicating for Ages 9-12

Skill:

Effective communication includes much more than talking. When you talk with your child about other ways, it builds a deeper understanding of effective communication.

Tip:

Before their experiment, the children and the teachers used words as a way of being in control. But they learned that not talking actually required more self control than talking all of the time. Ask your child why not talking helped them have more control than talking all of the time.

Skill:

Communicating requires **self control**, which develops over time and with practice and calls on **Executive Function** skills.

Tip:

The fifth grade boys think girls have “cooties,” and the girls think the boys have “cooties.” Dave and Lynsey are described as the king and queen of the “cootie-clingers”—they have zero tolerance for the other sex. At the end of the book, there is a “new normal” in their feelings about each other. Ask your child to talk about what led to these changed views.

Skill:

The skill of Communicating requires an understanding of the other person; it means **moving beyond stereotypes to be able to figure out what someone else might think and feel**.

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