

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:

Act out what Ben is doing in the book. Take turns making faces and copying Ben's gestures with your child.

Skill:

When you act out the ways Ben is communicating, you are helping your child **make connections between words and actions**. This will help your child learn new words and understand how others communicate.

Tip:

Ask your child what Penguin is doing:

- "Why is Penguin not responding at first? Do you think Ben could have done *anything* to get Penguin to respond? Why or why not?"

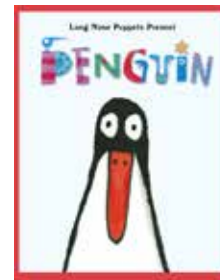
Skill:

The skill of Communicating involves helping your child learn **what he or she wants to communicate and how to communicate so others will understand**. When you talk about why Penguin doesn't respond to Ben at first, it helps your child think about what Penguin is trying to tell Ben by turning away. Your child has to put aside what he or she thinks to truly understand the perspective of Penguin, which calls on **Executive Function** skills. Giving your child insight into the perspectives of Penguin and of Ben helps your child learn to communicate more effectively.

Penguin

By Polly Dunbar

When Ben receives a penguin as a present, he tries to communicate with him in many different ways. Ben becomes increasingly frustrated when Penguin doesn't respond. Finally Penguin responds when Ben needs him most!



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 Infants and Toddlers

Tip:

Ben becomes upset because Penguin is not responding. You can share a time when you or your child was upset because someone was not listening or responding. Talk about why there was a breakdown in communication.

Skill:

By **sharing stories**, you are helping your child make the book relevant in his or her own life. Use what is called “**serve and return**” in this conversation, where, like a game of ball, you go back and forth, building on and extending what your child says and does. This conversation can help your child think about when communicating works and doesn’t work.

Tip:

At the end of the book, Ben and Penguin are communicating with each other: “Penguin said “everything.” Ask your child to talk about what Penguin finally has to say to Ben.

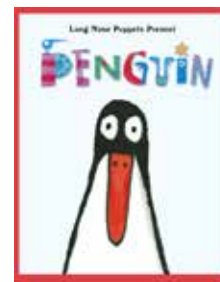
Skill:

Communicating includes **many different ways of connecting with others**. By talking with your child about different ways of communicating (through words, behavior, pictures, etc.), you are helping him or her have a deeper understanding of this skill.

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