

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 3-5



Tip:

Ask your child to look at the drawings and tell the story that he or she sees. There is no wrong answer here—so listen and talk about why your child is telling this particular story.



Skill:

Communicating **happens even when there are no words on the page**, just drawings and sounds.



Tip:

While you read this book, you can point out the facial expressions of the Lion and the Mouse. You can ask questions about the characters:

- “How is the Lion feeling? How is the Mouse feeling?”

These questions will help children become more attuned to looking at faces and what those faces are saying without words.



Skill:

Communicating involves facial expressions. Communicating with sounds and actions can make reading fun and interactive. You and your child can make the sounds or even act out the story.



Tip:

Ask children why they think the Lion freed the Mouse. How did that affect the Mouse when the Lion was trapped? As the book jacket states: “Even little friends can prove to be great friends.”



Skill:

Communicating includes **understanding how others will understand your communications**. To understand the perspectives of others and how they will hear what you say, you have to put aside your own thoughts and feelings—an **Executive Function** skill.



Tip:

Looking up information on the Internet about the artist, Jerry Pinkney, can make the experience of this book an even deeper one. For example, he had dyslexia as a child and had trouble reading, so he used drawing as a way to communicate.



Skill:

There are many ways to communicate—with drawings, as well as with words.

The Lion and the Mouse

By Jerry Pinkney

This wordless Caldecott Medal winner retells one of Aesop’s classic fables. After a lion frees a mouse he’d planned to eat, the mouse rescues him from a poacher’s trap. It’s a beautiful book about the importance of showing kindness.



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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.