

# 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:

The Storyteller's Candle, a story about Communicating, shares the experiences of Hildamar and her family who move from Puerto Rico to New York City during the Great Depression. Although Hildamar is surrounded by family and friends who speak Spanish, English is the language spoken in the major organizations in New York, like libraries. When Hildamar wants to go into the library, her aunt, Titi Maria, says: "We don't speak English, and the people in there don't speak Spanish," and so they never went inside. Ask your child:

- "How does it feel to be around people who speak a different language than you do?"
- "If you and a friend spoke a different language, could you find ways to communicate besides using words?"

#### Skill:

Communicating **involves much more than words**.

#### Tip:

When the children in the story meet a Puerto Rican librarian, Pura Belpré, everything changes. Ask your child:

- "What did Pura Belpré do to welcome the children and their families into the library?"

Talk about how you can make people from different backgrounds who speak different languages feel welcome.

#### Skill:

Making people **feel welcome** is a form of Communicating.

#### Tip:

Ask your child:

- "What does the author of this book, Lucia González, say that makes you feel as if you are really in Puerto Rico?"

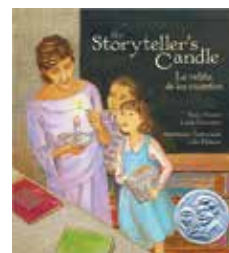
#### Skill:

Communicating involves **describing experiences in ways that make you feel that you are there**.

### The Storyteller's Candle

#### By Lucia González

This bilingual English/Spanish picture book tells the story of two cousins who have come to America from Puerto Rico and assume the local library is off-limits to them until Pura Belpré (New York City's first Latina librarian) teaches them otherwise.



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](http://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 6-8

#### Tip:

Ask your child:

- “What did the children learn from being in this play?”

#### Skill:

Communicating includes pretending and putting on plays. To do so, you have to put **aside what you think and know and pretend to become someone else**, which calls on **Executive Functions** skills.

#### Tip:

While reading the book, you can ask questions and imitate what the characters do. For example, you can close your eyes and make a wish with your child when the characters do.

#### Skill:

Communicating is effective when it is **relevant and experiential**.

#### Tip:

You can tell a story about your family history, or you can ask your child to share a story.

#### Skill:

We learn Communicating through storytelling.

#### Tip:

The illustrations in this book extend the story told in words. Ask your child:

- “Did you notice the collages in the illustrations?”

The illustrations include clips of newspaper from *The New York Times* of January 6, 1930—just when the story in the book took place. You can read some of these words from the newspaper clippings to your child and discuss them.

#### Skill:

**Understanding how people communicated in the past** is an important aspect of understanding Communicating.

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