

# MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

## Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF): Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is the ongoing search for **valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions and actions.**

### Suggestions for Promoting Critical Thinking for Ages 6-8

#### TIP:

*Grace for President* begins with Grace's observation that there are no women on the poster of Presidents and asks: "Where are the girls?"

Ask your child:

- "Why do you think that Grace noticed that there has never been a woman President and others didn't bring it up?"
- "Have you ever noticed something that no one else has mentioned?"

Ask your child to share his or her stories and point out how important it is to pay close attention to what is going on.

#### SKILL:

In order to **think critically**, children need to be **observant**.

#### TIP:

Grace and Thomas select very different slogans, promises and strategies to try to win this election. Ask your child to compare these slogans, promises and strategies and to guess which would work and which wouldn't and why.

#### SKILL:

Critical Thinking centers on understanding **cause and effect**, which draws on **Executive Function** skills.

#### TIP:

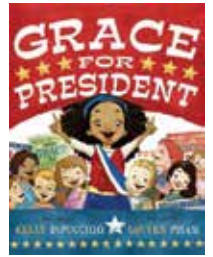
Thomas calculated that all of the girls would vote for Grace and all of the boys would vote for him. If he had been paying closer attention, he might not have made this assumption.

Ask your child to look for clues in the book's illustrations that indicate Thomas' theory might have been wrong. Here's a hint: ask your child to look for Sam in the illustrations.

## Grace for President

By Kelly DiPucchio

When Grace runs for President in her school's mock election, she learns she can only win if some of the boys vote for her. This is an empowering and fun story about the electoral system, hard work, independent thinking and using fair judgment.



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 Critical Thinking for Ages 6-8

#### SKILL:


Critical Thinking involves **testing your theories or hypotheses about cause and effect** to see if they are valid and accurate.

#### TIP:

Ask your child:

- “What problems did Grace and Thomas encounter in running for President? How did they solve them? What do you think of their solutions?”

#### SKILL:

 **Problem solving** is key to Critical Thinking.

#### TIP:

This book presents a great opportunity to understand the electoral system in the United States. Comparing the story in this book to children’s memories of recent or current elections will help them think critically about the history they are experiencing.

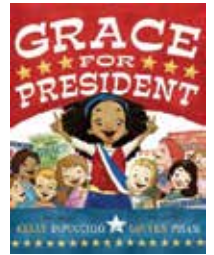
#### SKILL:

Critical Thinking includes **being able to remember previous experiences and information and apply this knowledge to the present.**

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