

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 3-5

Tip:

Have your child predict what will happen each time the mouse asks for something new.

Skill:

Critical Thinking centers on being **curious** and seeking to understand **cause and effect**, both of which call on **Executive Function** skills.

Tip:

The boy in the story has to figure out how to find what the mouse needs and how to clean up the mess this search is causing.

Ask your child:

- “What would you do if you were this child?”

Skill:

Even though this book is imaginary, it promotes **problem solving**, which is key to Critical Thinking.

Tip:

Once your child knows the story, you can ask what comes next when you re-read the book. Your child will use his or her memory to recall the order and the items the mouse requests, while having fun! And adults will enjoy this story where the energetic and enthusiastic mouse wears out the child (just like energetic and enthusiastic children can wear out adults).

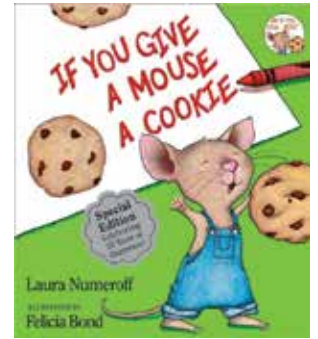
Skill:

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

If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

By Laura Numeroff

This wildly popular lesson in cause and effect stars a very bossy mouse! First he wants a cookie, then some milk, next a straw—what’s a boy to do?? The giggle-worthy story eventually comes full circle, making kids say, “Read it again!”



High-quality books and educational resources from First Book supporting research-based Life Skills from *Mind in the Making* by Ellen Galinsky



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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.