

# MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

**Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF):**

**Self-Directed, Engaged Learning**

It is through learning that we can realize our potential. As the world changes, so can we, for as long as we live—as long as we learn.

**Principles of Self-Directed, Engaged Learning**

- Establish a trustworthy relationship with your child.
- Help children set and work toward their own goals.
- Involve children socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- Elaborate and extend children's learning.
- Help children practice, synthesize and generalize.
- Help children become increasingly accountable.
- Create a community of learners.

Suggestions for Self-Directed, Engaged Learning for Ages 3-5

## Tip:

You can make this book fun by following the directions either before or after your child, taking turns and learning from one another.

## Skill:

Self-Directed, Engaged Learning is being **involved socially, emotionally and intellectually**. When you read the book with your child, taking turns, you are serving as a role model of a learner and involving him or her in ways that will promote **Executive Function** skills.

## Tip:

There are a number of puzzles in the book. Ask your child to guess what will happen next. For example, you can say to your child:

- "After rubbing the yellow dot on the left and it turns to red, what do you think will happen when you rub the yellow dot to the right?"
- "What do you think will happen when you tap on the dots five times?"
- "How can you figure out which dots have switched places?" You can give your child a hint by figuring out the pattern of dots two pages before.

## Skill:

By helping your child **ask and answer questions**, you are promoting your child's engagement in learning. This back and forth interaction is what researchers call "**serve and return**." Like a game of ball, one of you says or does something (serves) and the other responds (returns). The importance of these everyday interactions to brain building is a key finding from child development research.

## Tip:

As you read *Press Here*, talk about the concepts he or she may not know or may not know yet, like left and right. Give your child hints on how to remember these concepts, such as: "Make an L with your finger and thumb on your left hand."

## Skill:

Helping your child **elaborate and extend what he or she knows and transfer this knowledge to new situations** is fundamental to learning.

Press Here

By Herve Tullet

*Press Here* is an inventive concept—an interactive page-turner of a book where the child's actions lead to changes in the patterns of dots on each page.



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](http://www.mindinthemaking.org).