

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 Infants and Toddlers

Tip:

This fun-filled book of lifting flaps that reveal surprising animals hiding in everyday places is all based on the goal of finding Spot.

Skill:

One of the principles of promoting Self-Directed, Engaged Learning is helping children **set and then work toward goals**. **Executive Function** skills are driven by goals.

Tip:

You can play a similar game with your child, saying: "Where are you? There you are!" As your child gets older, you can make the game more difficult.

Skill:

Another principle of promoting Self-Directed, Engaged Learning is to **elaborate and extend what children do**. *Where's Spot?* is based on the game of hide and seek. The "Where are you? There you are!" 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:

This book is about a **trustworthy relationship**—a mother dog searching for her puppy to make sure he eats dinner. You can talk about all of the ways that families take care of their babies.

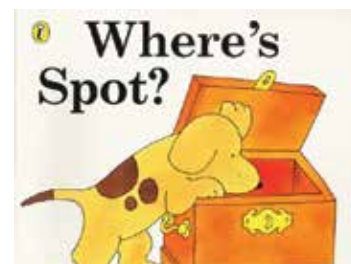
Skill:

Another principle of promoting Self-Directed, Engaged Learning is establishing a **trustworthy relationship** with your child.

Where's Spot?

By Eric Hill

Spot is a curious puppy, eager to explore his world. Young children can lift the flap on each page to find Spot, learning new descriptions and hiding places as they turn the pages.



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.

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.