

MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF): Making Connections

Making Connections is at the heart of learning—**figuring out what’s the same and what’s different, and sorting these things into categories. Making unusual connections is at the core of creativity.** In a world where people can Google for information, it is the people who can see connections who are able to go beyond knowing information to **using this information well.**

Suggestions for Promoting Making Connections for Ages 3-5

TIP:

You can point out that the peddler always wore his caps in the same order—on top of his own checked cap, he wore gray caps, brown caps, blue caps and then red caps. Have your child check this order on the different pages of the book.

SKILL:

Making Connections involves **putting things into categories.**

TIP:

Besides his own checked cap, the peddler had the same number of caps of each color. Ask your child to count them—there are four caps in each group—and then check that there are still four as the peddler walks through town and then out to the country for a nap. It should be especially fun to check these numbers when the monkeys are wearing the caps.

You can ask your child:

- “How many red caps do you see? How many blue caps?”

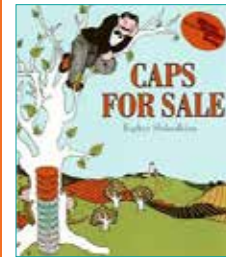
SKILL:

Making Connections involves **seeing that symbols stand for real things.**

Caps for Sale

By Esphyr Slobodkina

This funny folk tale has entertained readers for more than 70 years. Unable to sell his caps, a peddler falls asleep under a tree and awakens to find that monkeys have taken his caps! When they imitate



him, he finds a way to get his caps back.

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.

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Suggestions for Promoting Making Connections for Ages 3-5

TIP:

When the caps disappear after the peddler’s nap, you can ask your child:

- “Where do you think the caps went?”

Even if your child knows the answer because he or she had heard the story before, it is still fun to play this game.

Caps for Sale is a great illustration of Making Connections: the monkeys imitate or **make connections** between what the peddler does and what the monkeys do. You can ask your child to guess what the monkeys are going to do next when the peddler shakes his hands or stamps his feet.

SKILL:

Making Connections involves **making guesses about the future.**

TIP:

The peddler becomes so angry that he doesn’t use the experience of seeing that the monkeys are imitating him to figure out how to get his caps back. He stumbles on the solution: when he throws his own cap on the ground, all of the monkeys throw their caps on the ground too. You can ask children if they ever became so angry that they couldn’t figure out what to do to solve a problem?

Ask them:

- “What do you do to manage feeling angry?”

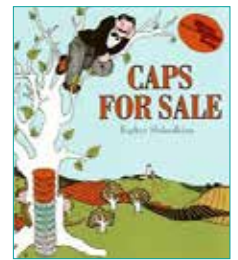
SKILL:

Making Connections between your own and others’ experiences can provide a powerful learning opportunity.

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