

# 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:

At every decision point—the long straight path, leading nowhere; the apple tree that needed guarding; and Harold being over his head in an ocean—Harold draws the solution.

Ask your child:

- “What would you draw if you were in Harold’s situation?”

There are no right answers here—what you want to do is promote your child’s imagination. You can offer your child a crayon and paper to create his or her own journey.

#### SKILL:

*Harold and the Purple Crayon* is a great illustration of **creativity, which involves making unusual connections** and calls on **Executive Function** skills.

#### TIP:

At the end of the book, Harold is lost and, despite his ability to draw solutions, he can’t find his way to his room. Harold is finally able to **make a connection** that helps him find his way.

You can ask:

- “Why do you think Harold remembered his window with the moon?”
- “What would you remember about your room?”

#### SKILL:

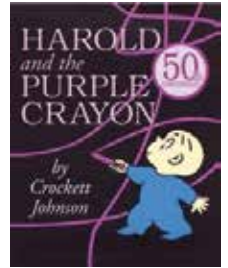
Making Connections between **your own experiences and others’ experiences** can provide a powerful learning opportunity.

## Harold and the Purple Crayon

By Crockett Johnson

This heartwarming classic has enchanted generations of readers. With his magical purple crayon, Harold is able to draw anything he’d like and watch it come to life.

The book is a wonderful celebration of art and the imagination!



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).