

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:

Ask your child:

- “What are the ways that Kailash and Elliot are the same?”
- “Look for clues in the pictures and in their letters to each other.”



Skill:

When your child looks for similarities, she or he is Making Connections; that is, creating categories of things that are alike. Some of these are talked about in the story, but some you have to search for. For example, there is a bird on top of the buses that each of them takes to school. To find these less obvious similarities, your child will have to pay careful attention to details.



Tip:

Ask your child:

- “What are the ways that Elliot and Kailash are different?”
- “What do you think it would be like to live in India, compared with where you live?”



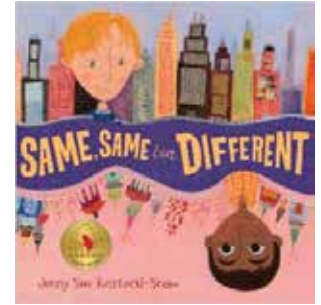
Skill:

In looking for differences, your child is paying attention to details. For example, Elliot wears the same striped shirt in all of the pictures, but Kailash wears different shirts. Your child is remembering what is alike and different and thinking flexibly. All of these call on **Executive Function** skills.

Same, Same but Different

By Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

Elliot from the United States and Kailash from India become pen pals and explore their similarities and differences through imaginative drawings and letters to each other.



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.

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Suggestions for Promoting Making Connections for Ages 3-5

Tip:

You can ask your child:

- “Why do think that these boys become best friends, even though they have never met?”
- “Think about your own friends. In what ways are you ‘same, same, but different?’ How do you think these similarities and differences affect your friendship?”

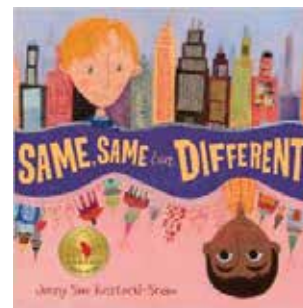
Skill:

Making Connections between letters, landscapes, sounds and words helps your child understand more about his or her language. In fact, researchers have recently found that the world’s written languages are all based on the same patterns of lines and angles and are based on these patterns in landscapes. This is fascinating because, on the surface, it seems so implausible—for instance, written languages in different parts of the world look so different—but it is true.. When you ask your child to **see things in different ways**, you are promoting **Executive Function** skills.

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