

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 6-8

Tip:

As you read *The Pot That Juan Built*, take the time to talk with your child about the natural materials Juan uses and how one thing can turn into something else.

Skill:

When you observe and discuss the different materials used in creating pottery, your child is making connections between **old and new information**. These connections help your child classify information in new ways, which is important to learning.

Tip:

Talk with your child about things in the world that were created from other things. It could be cereal that comes from corn or a wooden chair that comes from a tree.

Skill:

When you help your child discover what the everyday objects in the world are made from, you are giving him or her a deeper understanding of the environment and how natural materials are used. These connections can spur more questions about **what’s the same and what’s different** in the original object and what it becomes.

Tip:

Reminiscent of *This Is The House That Jack Built*, this book begins with the pot that Juan built and works backwards to share the steps in natural pottery making. Before you turn each page to reveal the next step, you can ask your child:

- “What do you think is going to come next in the book?”

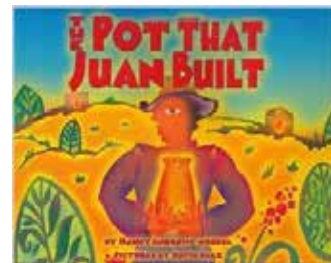
After you or your child read the poem, look at the text on the facing page to learn more about the process of pottery making.

Because the poem is repeated and elaborated upon in the book, see if your child can remember the words.

The Pot That Juan Built

By Nancy Andrews-Goebel

The Pot that Juan Built is a beautiful biography of a Mexican artist who rediscovers the ancient processes for making pottery used by the long-vanished Casas Grandes Indians in Northern Mexico.



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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Skill:

Predicting what comes next and asking your child to repeat and remember the words of the poem promote **paying attention to detail, remembering, analyzing information and anticipating**, all of which call on **Executive Function** skills.

Tip:

At the end of the book, there is an historical “Afterword,” which discusses the impact of Juan’s discovery on his village of Mata Ortiz, transforming it from an impoverished community to a community of world famous artists. Share stories you know about how people have transformed communities and helped them thrive.

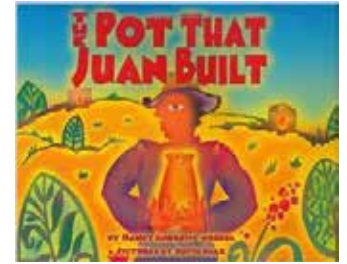
Skill:

This back and forth conversation 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.

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