

MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF): Perspective Taking

Perspective Taking goes far beyond empathy. It involves **figuring out what others think and feel** and forms the basis for children's understanding of the intentions of their parents, teachers and friends. Children who can take the perspectives of others are also much less likely to get involved in conflicts.

Suggestions for Promoting Perspective Taking for Infants and Toddlers

TIP:

While reading this book, you can talk about what the Mother Duck might be feeling and thinking. Talk about the clues you see in the book's illustrations to understand Mother Duck's emotions.

SKILL:

Perspective Taking involves **understanding what others think and feel**. To do so, you have to put aside your own perspectives, which calls on **Executive Function** skills.

TIP:

With older children, you can help them be more attuned to the feelings of others by asking such questions as:

- "How do you think Mother Duck felt when not all of her little ducks came back? How do you know?"

Have the children look at the Mother Duck's expressions as fewer and fewer of her little ducks returned, and then look at her expressions in the fall and winter.

SKILL:

Looking at the faces and body expressions of the characters in books is an important way children learn to "read" the feelings and thoughts of others.

TIP:

At the end of the book, ask your child:

- "How does Mother Duck feel when all of the little ducks came back? How do you know?"

Five Little Ducks

By Raffi

Illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey

A toddler favorite, this colorful board book features a classic counting song in which, one by one, five little ducklings leave their loving duck mother. In the end (hooray!) each returns to her, trailed by a flock of surprises.



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 Perspective Taking for Infants and Toddlers

SKILL:

This back and forth conversation about the book 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:

With older children, this book offers many opportunities for looking at the different colors of the ducks and for counting. On the last page of the book, have your child count how many baby ducks each little duck now has.

SKILL:

Paying attention to details promotes **Executive Function** skills.

TIP:

You can talk with your child about how he or she might feel if your child was the Mother Duck or the little ducks.

Ask your child:

- “How do you think you would feel if you couldn't find someone you were looking for?”
- “How would you feel if you were the little ducks and left home to be on your own?”

SKILL:

Perspective Taking is **learned through putting yourself in another's “shoes.”** By talking about the **viewpoints of others**—in stories and in their own lives—you are helping children learn the skill of Perspective Taking.

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