

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:

This book provides a great opportunity for children to learn that different animals make different sounds. With very young children, imitate the sounds the animals in the book make, such as roaring, snorting and hissing. When your child learns the words and sounds of this book, ask him or her to make the sound with you. You can also say the word "roaring," and have your child make the sound.

SKILL:

Perspective Taking involves **understanding the perspectives of others**, including what they sound like. To take the perspectives of others, you have to **put aside your own thoughts and feelings**, which calls on **Executive Function** skills.

The back and forth interaction you have with your child in sharing this story 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:

On the last page of the book, children pretend to be the animals. Have your child pretend, too.

SKILL:

Pretending is an important way children learn to take the perspectives of others.

TIP:

After you have read this story, use the refrain in your everyday life, saying to your child: "[Your child's name, your child's name], what do you hear?"

Have your child listen for all of the different sounds around him or her, like the sounds of birds, honking horns, etc.

SKILL:

Perspective Taking is promoted by **asking questions, imitating and repeating**.

Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?

By Bill Martin, Jr.
and Eric Carle

A masterful book and noisy trip to the zoo! Polar Bear says he hears a lion roaring. Lion says he hears a hippo snorting. As the perspective shifts from animal to animal, children chime in, practice animal sounds and make predictions.



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.