

# 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 Ages 9-12

#### Tip:

Talk with your child about how Jemmy, the whipping boy, and the Prince learned more about each other by experiencing different things in each other's lives. You can ask such questions as:

- "Why did the Prince want to run away from a privileged life—a life that others thought would be a great life?"
- "The Prince admired Jemmy for not crying out when he was whipped. What else did he learn to admire about him when the boys were captured by outlaws? What did he admire about Jemmy when the boys were running away from the outlaws in the sewers?"
- "Jemmy hadn't been impressed by the Prince's character before they ran away. What happened that began to change his mind about the Prince?"

#### Skill:

Perspective Taking includes being able to **step back from your own attitudes, thoughts and feelings in order to understand the perspectives of others**. It also includes figuring out why others act and think as they do. The stories in this book offer an ideal opportunity to promote this kind of thinking, which call on **Executive Function** skills.

#### Tip:

Ask your child about switching places in his or her own life:

- "Who would you most switch places with? Why?"
- "Who do you think would like to switch places with you? Why?"

#### Skill:

Perspective Taking is promoted by thinking and talking about your own feelings and having the opportunity to think about others' lives in relation to your own. This back and forth conversation you have with your child about this 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.

## The Whipping Boy

By Sid Fleischman

Jemmy, an orphan boy was snatched from the streets and kept in the castle to be the "whipping boy," punished whenever Prince Brat (as he was known) did anything wrong, which was very often. One night, Prince Brat commanded Jemmy to run away with him because he was bored. Many adventures ensue where the boys learn that to survive, they have to trust 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](http://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](http://www.mindinthemaking.org).