

MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF):

Taking on Challenges

Life is full of stresses and challenges. Children who are willing to **take on challenges** (instead of avoiding them or simply coping with them) do better in school and in life.

Suggestions for Promoting Taking on Challenges for Ages 6-8

Tip:

Even though Ping is an experienced gardener, he cannot seem to get the seed to grow. Talk with your child about all the different things Ping did to try to make the seed grow.

Skill:

Facing challenges, like the Emperor's Proclamation, requires **putting in effort and trying different strategies**. This back and forth conversation with your child 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:

Ping was ashamed to bring the empty pot to the Emperor. His father said, "You did your best and your best is good enough to present to the Emperor." Even with his Father's support, he hung his head in shame when facing the Emperor. Ask your child:

- "Can you think of a time when you tried hard, but you didn't achieve the results you wanted. What helped you?"

Share a story of an experience of yours where you didn't achieve what you wanted but others helped you deal with it.

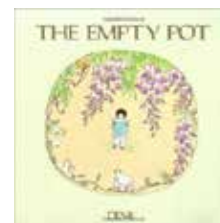
Skill:

Taking on Challenges includes **having people who believe in you and support you**. When you share your stories, you are helping your child understand that asking for and accepting help is a part of being able to take on challenges.

The Empty Pot

By Demi

In a kingdom where everyone loved flowers, the Emperor was very old and had to choose a successor. He issued a proclamation to the children of the land. He would give each of them a flower seed and said, "Whoever can show me their best in a year's time, will succeed me to the throne." Ping worked hard, but despite his usual skill with flowers, nothing grew. Sadly, he had to face the Emperor with an empty pot. This beautifully illustrated book is both charming and inspirational.



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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Tip:

The result of this contest was unexpected because Ping was honest. He didn't know the Emperor was testing the children's character by giving them seeds that had been cooked and wouldn't grow.

Ask your child:

- "Why is it important to tell the truth?"

Skill:

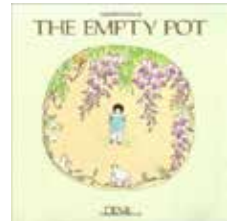
Taking on Challenges requires **courage**; telling the truth is a courageous thing to do.

Note: You will enjoy looking carefully at the illustrations in this book and talking with your child about what the pictures tell you about life in that long-ago Chinese kingdom.

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