

SEVEN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

Skill Building Book Tips

You can read *Wilma Unlimited* in a way that highlights Focus and Self Control, a Life Skill that promotes Executive Functions. Children need this skill in order to achieve their **goals**, especially in a world that is filled with distractions and information overload. It involves **paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly** and **exercising self control**.

TIP:

The book says that Wilma began running and jumping as soon as she learned to walk. Moving was a strength of hers from early on. Ask your child to think about his or her unique strengths and interests. Then ask your child to think about how he or she can use these strengths to achieve a goal, even if challenges arise along the way.

SKILL:

Focus and Self Control is promoted when **we build upon our strengths and have meaningful goals**. **Executive Function** skills are driven by goals.

This back and forth conversation you have about your child's unique strengths, interests and goals is what researchers call "**Take-Turns Talk**." Like a game of ball, one of you says or does something and the other responds. The importance of these everyday interactions to brain building is a key finding from child development research.

TIP:

Ask your child what helped Wilma become the fastest runner in the Olympics. For example, after she was stricken with polio, she wanted to be able to go school with everyone else. So, she worked hard and practiced walking even though nobody ever thought she would be able to move around without a brace. When she took off her brace and walked into church, she "took her mind off her knees by concentrating on taking another breath, and then another."

SKILL:

When you ask your child to reflect on Wilma's experiences, you are helping him or her see how empowering it can be to **set goals and concentrate on achieving them**.

TIP:

Make a list of strategies your child can use to work toward a goal he or she cares about. These strategies could include setting up practice time, getting help from others, positive self talk, taking

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By Kathleen Krull

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your mind off problems, using the “power of concentration,” and remembering the goal.

SKILL:

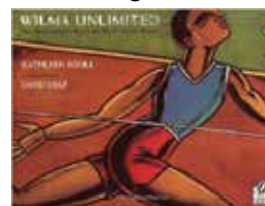
Achieving goals depends on using specific **strategies**, especially if there are challenges. When you make a list of strategies with your child, you are promoting the skill of Focus and Self Control.

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MIND in the Making
The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs