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.
**Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF): Communicating**

Communicating is much more than understanding language, speaking, reading and writing. It is the skill of **determining what you want to communicate** and **realizing how our communications will be understood by others**. It is the skill that teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.

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**Tip:**

Ben becomes upset because Penguin is not responding. You can share a time when you or your child was upset because someone was not listening or responding. Talk about why there was a breakdown in communication.

**Skill:**

By **sharing stories**, you are helping your child make the book relevant in his or her own life. Use what is called “**serve and return**” in this conversation, where, like a game of ball, you go back and forth, building on and extending what your child says and does. This conversation can help your child think about when communicating works and doesn’t work.

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**Tip:**

At the end of the book, Ben and Penguin are communicating with each other: “Penguin said “everything.” Ask your child to talk about what Penguin finally has to say to Ben.

**Skill:**

Communicating includes **many different ways of connecting with others**. By talking with your child about different ways of communicating (through words, behavior, pictures, etc.), you are helping him or her have a deeper understanding of this skill.