Executive Function Life Skill: Self-Directed, Engaged Learning
It is through learning that we can realize our potential. As the world changes, so can we, for as long as we live—as long as we learn.

- Establish a trustworthy relationship with your child.
- Help children set and work toward their own goals.
- Involve children socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- Elaborate and extend children’s learning.
- Help children practice, synthesize and generalize.
- Help children become increasingly accountable.
- Create a community of learners.

Skill:
Self-Directed, Engaged Learning is furthered when children and adults have meaningful goals of their own that they pursue. Executive Function skills are driven by goals.

Tip:
Naima wanted to do things that boys in her village could do but weren’t acceptable for girls, like making money to help her family and drive a rickshaw. But Naima begins to find that change is coming. As the woman owner of the repair shop tells Naima, “Things are changing whether people around here like it or not. These days a woman who wants to start her own business can borrow money from our women’s bank. We decided to put our money together and help each other.”

Ask your child:
- “Can you think of a time when you wanted to do something that wasn’t accepted practice? How did that feel?”

Tell your child about some of the things that weren’t accepted practice when you were growing up and that you helped change.

Skill:
Self Directed, Engaged Learning includes building on individual strengths. This back and forth conversation you have 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.