

MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Executive Function Life Skill: Making Connections

Making connections is at the heart of learning—**figuring out what's the same and what's different, and sorting these things into categories. Making unusual connections is at the core of creativity.** In a world where people can Google for information, it is the people who can see connections who are able to go beyond knowing information to **using this information well.**

Suggestions for Promoting Making Connections



Tip:

As you read, *Not a Box*, point to the outline of the box in each picture showing your child how the shape becomes part of something different.



Skill:

When you point out the box shape (outlined in black) within the other objects that the rabbit imagines, you are helping your child see an object in many new ways. This builds connections between new and old information, which promote **sorting, classifying** and seeing **that one thing can represent something else**—a basic skill in learning about reading, writing, science and math in the future. All of these ways of thinking call on **Executive Functions** of the brain.



Tip:

On each black and white page with the rabbit and the box, ask your child to guess what the box is going to become. There are no wrong answers here.



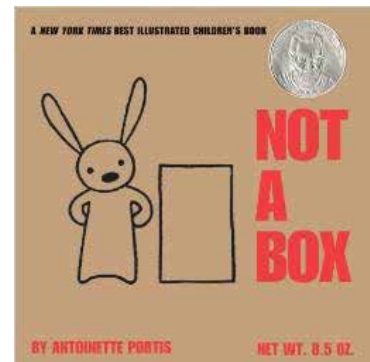
Skill:

When your child guesses what will happen next, he or she is developing a **hypothesis**, as scientists do when they create experiments. This back and forth conversation you have 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.

Not a Box

By Antoinette Portis

A box is just a box, or is it? There are no limits to what a box can be in a rabbit's imagination in this creative book.



High-quality books and educational resources from First Book supporting research-based Life Skills from *Mind in the Making* by Ellen Galinsky



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You will notice that these tips promote two child development principles: **Serve and Return** and **Executive Function** skills.

Serve and Return, like 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 Families and Work Institute's *Mind in the Making* at www.mindinthemaking.org.