

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:

While you read this book, you can interact with your child by asking:

- “Where is the baby who was born far away?”

Point to the baby in the book, and then ask: “Where is my baby?” and point to your child.



SKILL:

Making Connections includes **figuring out what's the same and what's different**, which calls on **Executive Function** skills. These back and forth conversations with and without words that are triggered by this book involve 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:

You can count or touch your child's toes and fingers. Point to the book and then to your child.



SKILL:

Making Connections is promoted by **repetition and interaction.**



TIP:

You can give your child three little kisses on the nose, just like in the book.

This book is an ideal one to use in your everyday interactions with your child. When you are dressing him or her, you can say:

- “I see ten little fingers and ten little toes.”



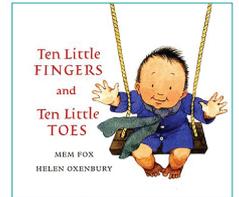
SKILL:

Making Connections among words, pictures and objects promotes this skill.

Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes

By Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury

In this sweet book, young children meet a cast of smiling, round-cheeked babies from around the world as they're told about a universal trait that (almost) all babies have in common. Bouncy rhymes and repetition make this a wonderful read-aloud for babies and toddlers.



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 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.