

# 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 *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?*, ask your child to guess what each body part does and match it to the animal before you turn the page.



#### Skill:

When you ask children to come up with their own ideas, they are creating **new connections between new and old information.**



#### Tip:

Ask your child:

- “In what ways do animals use their noses in similar and in different ways?” Their ears? Their eyes? Their mouths? Their tails?”



#### Skill:

In asking your child to look for similarities and differences, you are asking him or her to form **larger categories**, looking at information in new and creative ways, which promotes **Executive Function** skills.



#### Tip:

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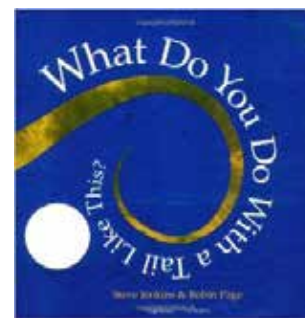
#### Skill:

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### What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?

By Steve Jenkins

*What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* is an interactive book exploring the amazing things animals can do with their ears, eyes, mouths, noses and tails.



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](http://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](http://www.mindinthemaking.org).

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## Suggestions for Promoting Making Connections



### Tip:

Ask your child:

- “How do some of the other animals you know use their noses and other parts of their bodies?”



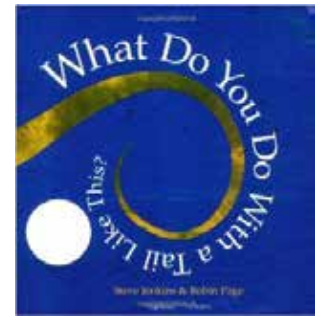
### Skill:

When you expand the conversation, it is an opportunity to make connections for your child, promoting thinking about his or her experiences in new ways. This back and forth interaction 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.

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