

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:

Miranda and Marcus have a conversation about time travel and common sense. Talk with your child about these statements, *“Einstein says common sense is just habit of thought. It’s how we’re used to thinking about things, but a lot of the time it just gets in the way.”* Ask your child if he or she can think of a time that he or she saw a different way or if this book helped him or her see things differently as the story unfolded.



Skill:

When you talk about different views and new ideas you are helping your child make connections between new information and old information; this promotes learning. When your child can make unusual connections, this promotes creativity.



Tip:

There are many instances throughout the book that Miranda makes new connections between what she thought and what actually happened as well as what she thought was or was not possible. The laughing man actually was a time traveler to save her friend Sal from getting killed by the car; the notes were actually the laughing man, not a bad guy; and all of the clues in the notes lead up to the ending.

Talk with your child about who he or she thought were writing the notes and what the notes meant. Did he or she suspect the laughing man?



Skill:

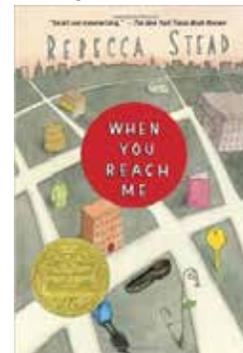
When you have conversations with your child about initial thoughts and new thoughts based on new information, you are helping him or her be aware of the learning process and how connections are made. When we are aware of how we are thinking, we can learn additional ways to process information.

Note: Since *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline D’Engle is so important in *When You Reach Me*, your child might enjoy reading it and talking with you about the connections between the two books.

When You Reach Me

By Rebecca Stead

The prize-winning book, *When You Reach Me* is a suspenseful and clever story about a girl trying to prevent what appears to be a tragic death.



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.