

MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Executive Function Life Skill: Perspective Taking

Perspective Taking goes far beyond empathy; it involves figuring out what others think and feel, and forms the basis for children's understanding of their parents', teachers' and friends' intentions. Children who can take the perspectives of others are also much less likely to get involved in conflicts.

Suggestions for Promoting Perspective Taking



Tip:

You can ask children questions about the ways the people in the book differ from their own experience. For example, you can say:

- "What are their clothes like? How are they different from the clothes you wear?"
- "What are their homes like? How are they different from your home?"
- "What else do you see that is different?"



Skill:

Perspective Taking is being able to understand what others think and feel. By talking about the differences your child sees in the book, you are helping your child learn about Perspective Taking because your child is learning about the perspectives and experiences of others. 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.



Tip:

You can point out the people in the book that might look differently or live differently, but draw attention to how we are all alike. For example, you can say:

- "He cries. I cry. You cry. We all cry sometimes."
- "Even if we look and live differently from others, we all laugh."



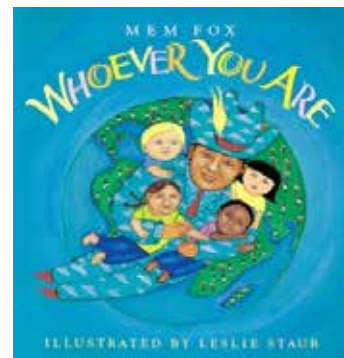
Skill:

When you talk about the ways that the children in the book are just like your child, you are helping him or her form a basis of understanding about the deeper similarities among people. By helping your child gain these understandings, you are promoting Perspective Taking and your child's **Executive Function** skills.

Whoever You Are

By Mem Fox

Whoever You Are shares the way that children all over the world differ and yet are the same, and all is far too quiet until her joyful return.



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.