

SEVEN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

Skill Building Book Tips

You can read *Whistle for Willie* in a way that highlights Focus and Self Control, a Life Skill that promotes Executive Functions. Children need this skill in order to achieve their **goals**, especially in a world that is filled with distractions and information overload. It involves **paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly** and **exercising self control**.



TIP:

You can ask your child:

- “What did Peter do to learn how to whistle?”



SKILL:

When your child retells parts of the story, he or she is developing Focus and Self Control by **paying attention and remembering**. Focus and Self Control also includes **being able to practice in order to work toward a goal**. **Executive Function** skills are driven by goals.



TIP:

We all do better at achieving our goals if they are important to us.

You can ask:

- “Why did Peter want to learn to whistle?”

Wait for the child’s response and respond to that, perhaps by asking:

- “Did Willie notice Peter when he couldn’t whistle?”



SKILL:

This back and forth conversation is what researchers call “**Take-Turns Talk**.” Like a game of ball, one of you says or does something and the other responds. The importance of these everyday interactions to brain-building is a key finding from child development research.



TIP:

You can share a story with the child about a time that you had to exercise **self control** to work toward a goal that was important to you. Or you can remind your child of a time that he or she worked toward a goal, such as throwing a ball, saying a hard word or going to a new place. By telling inspiring stories about your child’s past, you are helping your child build a “can-do” self image.



SKILL:

It is important for children to be aware that working toward a goal **takes time, practice and effort, and takes believing you can achieve the goal**.

Whistle for Willie

By Ezra Jack Keats

Many children will recognize the star of this beloved book—it’s Peter from *The Snowy Day*! Here, he models both patience and practice as he teaches himself to whistle so that he can summon his dog.



These tips sheets were developed by *Mind in the Making*, in collaboration with First Book. *Mind in the Making* and Vroom are programs of the Bezos Family Foundation. Find more books and materials on the First Book Marketplace, a resource available exclusively to educators and programs serving children in need. Visit: www.fbmarketplace.org.



You Can See Sound

Items Needed

- Large Bowl
- Plastic Wrap
- 1 teaspoon Uncooked Rice
- Metal Pan (Cookie Sheets or Pans are good options, but they must be metal)
- Metal Spoon

Instructions

1. Tear off a piece of plastic wrap big enough to cover the top of the bowl.
2. Secure the plastic wrap over the bowl. Make sure that the plastic wrap is very tight.
3. Pour 1 teaspoon of uncooked rice on the top of the plastic wrap.
4. Hold the metal pan in the air and position it next to the bowl
5. Take the metal spoon and bang on the metal pan like a drum and watch what happens to the rice.

How Does the Experiment Work?

The rice moves and jumps around because of the sound waves that are caused when the spoon hits the pan. These invisible sound waves travel through the air and when they reach the plastic wrap they cause it to vibrate, causing the rice to move. Sound waves are also what allow us to hear the noise of the spoon hitting the pan.

