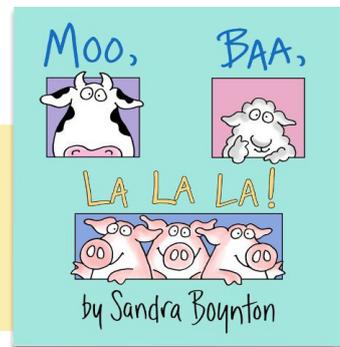


Moo, Ba, La La La!



Communicating is much more than understanding language, speaking, reading, and writing. It is the skill of determining what you want to express and realizing how our words and actions will be understood by others.

Children are more likely to learn this life skill when adults help them understand the many different ways they can communicate, and how those around them may communicate differently. Children who can understand various styles of communication are much less likely to get involved in conflicts.

Reading books with children can help children learn the life skills essential to everyday life success. Books like “Moo, Ba, La La La!” can specifically be used to develop the skill of Communicating.

Try these activities while reading with your child:

This book provides a great opportunity for children to think about when there are missed communications and how they can be repaired.

1.

Help your child think about the sounds animals make and enjoy the humor together when the pigs say the wrong thing! You can ask your child:

- “What do cows say? What do sheep say?” And what do the pigs say in this book?” If your child says, “La, la, la,” you can ask what pigs usually say.
- If your child appreciates the humor of the three pigs singing, “La, la, la,” keep the joke going and ask your child to make up other silly sounds that animals might make.

2.

If your child is younger, repeat the sounds your child makes. If your child says “bbbb” you can say or sing “bbbb” back to see if you can create a back and forth conversation with sounds. If you know what your child is trying to communicate, use words to respond: “You went agggghh. I think you want me to pick you UP.” These back and forth conversations—with and without words—are a key way that children learn to talk and communicate in the future.

3.

If your child is older, you can use this book as a starting point to talk about communicating in general: “What do you say when you are hungry? What do you say when you want me to pick you up? What noises do the dog or cat make when he wants food?”

You will notice that these tips promote two child development principles: 1) Serve & Return. Like game of ball, serve and return involves a back and forth conversation where you listen, then build on - and extend - what your child says or does to promote learning. 2) Executive Function skills are skills that are used to manage attention, feelings, thoughts and behavior to achieve goals. They include being able to pay attention, remember information, think flexibly and exercise self-control. All of the life skills, like Communicating, call on Executive Function Skills, which studies find help children thrive now and in the future.

Life skills are discussed in depth in [Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs](#) by Ellen Galinsky, president of Families and Work Institute. Mind in the Making shares the best research on children’s and adults learning. Its mission is to promote executive function life skills in order to keep the fire for learning burning brightly in all of us. Find more about Families and Work Institute’s Mind in the Making at www.mindinthemaking.org.