

# Mind in the Making

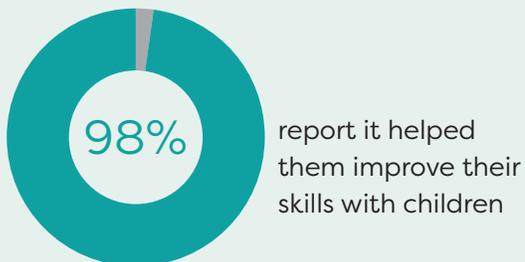
Building essential life skills in children by transforming groundbreaking research into practice



“ The behavior you see in a child is like observing the sky without a telescope. You just see a little. You’ve got to peer deeper.”

- JEROME KAGAN  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

## IN A SURVEY WITH 1,750 RESPONDENTS WHO ATTENDED MITM TRAININGS:



## What is Mind in the Making?

Mind in the Making (MITM), a program of the Bezos Family Foundation, shares the science of children’s learning through innovative in-depth training and materials geared for action.

MITM’s Learning Modules, Skill-Building Opportunities and Book Tips serve professionals and caregivers across a wide array of sectors and take a two-generational approach to building executive function-based life skills within children and families together.

## Behind the Research

In 2000, MITM founder Ellen Galinsky began a research journey fueled by a question: how to keep the fire for learning – which every child is born with – lighting up the eyes of children? To answer the question, she reviewed hundreds of studies and interviewed nearly 100 leading researchers who study children’s development and learning. From this, she developed the MITM seven essential life skills framework, which has since grown into a national movement to share scientifically-based research and strategies for promoting life skills.

## Why Executive Functions?

Executive function refers to the processes that involve managing thoughts, actions and emotions to achieve goals. These skills begin to develop early in a child’s life through experiences and interactions. The skills make it possible to consider alternative perspectives and respond to changing circumstances (cognitive flexibility), to keep information in one’s mind so it can be used (working memory), and to resist automatic and impulsive behavior (inhibitory control) so one can engage in goal-directed reasoning and problem solving. Children with better executive function skills learn more from educational experiences, are more likely to graduate from college, and have better health and wealth in adulthood.

# MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

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

@Mindinthemaking @MITM\_BFF

## MITM'S SEVEN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

helps adults understand and encourage important executive function-based skills children need to thrive.



1. **Focus and Self Control** – Children need this skill to achieve goals, especially in a world filled with distractions and information overload. This includes paying attention, exercising self-control, remembering the rules, and thinking flexibility.



2. **Perspective Taking** – This involves understanding what others think and feel, and forms the basis for children's understanding of the intentions of parents, teachers and friends. Children with this skill are less likely to get involved in conflicts.



3. **Communicating** – Much more than reading, writing and speaking, communicating is the skill of determining what one wants to communicate and realizing how it will be understood by others. It is the skill teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.



4. **Making Connections** – This involves deciphering what's the same, what's different, and sorting them into categories. Making unusual connections is at the core of creativity and moves children beyond knowing information to using information well.



5. **Critical Thinking** – This skill helps children analyze and evaluate information to guide their beliefs, decisions and actions. Children need critical thinking to make sense of the world around them and to solve problems.



6. **Taking on Challenges** – Children who take on challenges instead of avoiding or simply coping with them achieve better outcomes in school and in life.



7. **Self-Directed, Engaged Learning** – By setting goals and strategies for learning, children become attuned and better prepared to change as the world changes. This helps children foster their innate curiosity to learn and helps them realize their potential.

## MITM Resources

### LEARNING MODULES

MITM combines deep research focused on executive function skills, with signature science-fueled training modules, for professionals across sectors who work with children and families. The trainings provide opportunities for adults to examine themselves, the research and the action they can take to promote effective learning in themselves and in children.

### SKILL-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

Picky Eating, Bedtime Fears, Meltdowns, Constant Crying, Sibling Rivalry: what's a caregiver to do? We've researched the questions families and teachers most frequently ask and created short free guides, available in English and Spanish, for professionals and families to help turn common behavioral issues into opportunities to promote critical life skills in children.

### BOOK TIPS

These free, downloadable resources offer tips for building the Seven Essential Life Skills based on classic children's books that promote the skills. Designed for four age groups, 0 to 2, 3 to 5 years, 6 to 8 years and 9 to 12 years, Book Tips are available for download in English and Spanish on [mindinthemaking.org](http://mindinthemaking.org).

## Impact

### TRAINING

- **About 100,000 educators, community leaders, families, and professionals** from education, libraries, medical facilities, museums, nonprofits, churches, prisons and more have participated in the MITM training modules.
- **MITM advised Mount Sinai Parenting Center** in the creation of its free, online Keystones of Development curriculum to train pediatric residents on promoting brain development and helping strengthen parent-child relationships within routine well-child visits.

### CURATING THE SCIENCE

The MITM team has reviewed over 2000 studies, and interviewed and filmed more than 160 leading researchers, all work used to create MITM training and tools, and provide the science behind [Vroom](http://Vroom), a program of the Bezos Family Foundation that turns everyday activities into brain-building moments.