

Skill-Building Book Tips

7 Essential Life Skills

Read *The Art Lesson* in a way that highlights Focus and Self Control, a Life Skill that promotes Executive Functions. Children need this skill to achieve their **goals**, especially in a world that's filled with distractions and information overload. It involves **paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly and exercising self control.**

Tip

Ask your child:

- “What was Tommy’s goal? How did he work toward it?”

Wait for the child’s response and respond to that.

Skill

This back-and-forth interaction 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 ask:

- “What were the goals of Tommy’s friends?”

Skill

Focus and Self Control includes **having a goal and working toward it, even when you feel like doing something else or others want you to do something else. Executive Function** skills are driven by goals.

Tip

Ask your child to think about what Tommy did when he was told to take his box of 64 crayons home or to copy a picture?

You can ask:

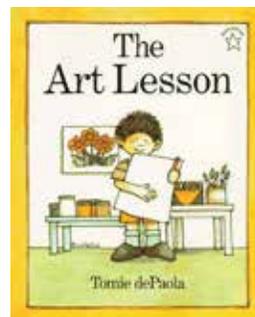
- “Did that help Tommy achieve his goal?”

Continue the conversation by asking:

- “Have you ever had a time you wanted to do something different and had to wait? What did you do to help yourself wait?”

The Art Lesson By Tomie dePaola

Tommy is a creative kid who loves to draw until a strict teacher makes him follow the rules of her art class. An autobiographical story by beloved author Tomie DePaola, this is an empowering ode to creativity!



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Skill

Focus and Self Control requires us to **be able to think about things flexibly** as well as **not to go on automatic**, but to **exercise self control**.

Tip

The book ends with the fact that Tommy continued to draw and still does.

Ask the children if they notice that the character in the book (Tommy) and the book's creator (Tomie) have almost the same name.

Skill

Children might enjoy looking up Tomie dePaola and learning more about him.

Pursuing additional information requires Focus and Self Control.

These tips sheets were developed by *Mind in the Making*, in collaboration with First Book. 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**.