

# Skill-Building Book Tips

## 7 Essential Life Skills

Explore *The Best Seat in Second Grade* 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

Sam was tired of waiting to be the Hamster Helper. Talk with your child about a time he was tired of waiting for something. Try to recall what she did to make the waiting easier.

### Skill

Focus and Self Control includes **waiting for something, even when it's hard**. This is learning to exercise **self-control**, an **Executive Function** skill. Helping your child remember what he did to make the waiting easier promotes this skill. The back-and-forth conversation you have with him about waiting 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

Share what you do when you need to stay focused, even when it's hard or when you can't go on automatic. For example, sing or think about happy things while sitting in traffic or waiting for the bus.

### Skill

Focus and Self Control is promoted when you have **strategies** to use when you're challenged or distracted. When you share your story and strategies with your child, you're teaching him new ways to develop self-control.

### Tip

Sam took the hamster on the field trip because he couldn't resist sharing the experience with him. Talk with your child about how Sam didn't consider the consequences, especially the risk of losing the hamster. Ask him how Sam might have handled the situation differently. Share a time that you didn't think ahead and how that affected you or others. For example, saying something that hurt someone else's feelings. Share what you do now to stop and think ahead.

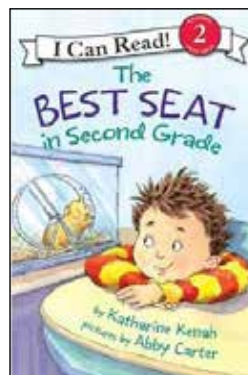
### Skill

Finding ways to stop and think ahead require reflecting and resisting the temptation to go on autopilot. Your child will learn from your experience.

### The Best Seat in Second Grade

By Katharine Kenah

Sam feels he has the best seat in his classroom: right next to the class hamster. Yearning to show the hamster the world outside his cage, Sam sneaks him along on a class trip to the science museum, then loses him in the Hamster Habitat! ACK!



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