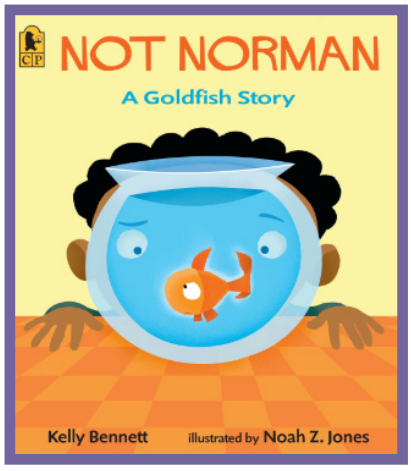


Not Norman: A Goldfish Story

By Kelly Bennett

ACTIVITY: DRAW A DREAM AQUARIUM!

SUPPLIES:

- Paper
- Markers or Crayons
- Bubble wrap or Plastic wrap (to cover it at the end for a special aquarium effect.)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Draw a rectangle or circle. This will be your aquarium!
2. Now draw any sea life you would like to have in your aquarium, such as fish, sharks, starfish, or seahorses .
3. Add coral or plants for your sea life to eat.
4. Add any home features you think your sea life would enjoy. Be creative!
5. When you are finished, cover your artwork with either bubble wrap or plastic wrap to create a water effect.

Take a pic!

Take a photo of your artwork and send it along with your name to:
connect@gradelevelreadingsuncoast.net

MIND in the Making

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Life Skill That Promotes Executive Function (EF): Communicating

Communicating is much more than understanding language, speaking, reading and writing. It is the skill of **determining what you want to communicate** and **realizing how our communications will be understood by others**. It is the skill that teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.

Suggestions for Promoting Communicating for Ages 3-5

Tip:

Talk with your child about why he or she thinks the boy would rather have a pet that could run and catch and climb trees and chase strings and sleep in his bed at night. You can ask your child which type of pet he or she would want and why.

Skill:

When you talk with your child about what the boy in the story wants and needs in a pet, you are helping your child **understand the thoughts and feelings of others**, which is an important part of Communicating. This back and forth conversation you have with your child is what researchers call "**serve and return.**" Like a game of ball, one of you says or does something (serves) and the other responds (returns). The importance of these everyday interactions to brain building is a key finding from child development research.

Tip:

The boy in the story begins to understand that his fish is, in fact, connecting with him. As you read *Not Norman*, point out all the ways the boy and the fish communicate with each other. For example, the boy realizes that he should clean the "gunky" fish bowl and fill his half empty bowl. And the fish listens to the boy at school when no one else does.

Skill:

In order to communicate well, we need to take time to understand one another—especially when we are as different as a child and a fish. By drawing attention to how Norman and the boy are learning to understand each other, you are helping your child see that understanding others is the basis of good communication.

Tip:

Throughout the story, the boy plans to trade Norman "for a good pet," but he eventually changes his mind. You can talk with your child about the importance of not making snap judgments of others.

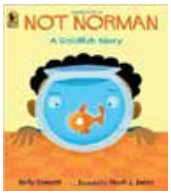
Skill:

Effective communication sometimes involves **putting aside your immediate reactions and getting to know someone else**—whether that someone else is a fish or a person. This process promotes **Executive Function** skills.

Not Norman

By Kelly Bennett

When a boy receives a pet goldfish named Norman, he thinks he would rather have a pet that does more than swim around in the bowl. He says, "I wanted a pet that could run and catch … not Norman." He plans to return Norman, but the more he realizes Norman is actually communicating with him, the more he feels he would rather have Norman than any other pet in the whole world.



High-quality books and educational resources from First Book supporting research-based Life Skills from *Mind in the Making* by Ellen Galinsky

Find more books and materials on the First Book Marketplace, a resource available exclusively to educators and programs serving children in need. www.fbmarketplace.org.

You will notice that these tips promote two child development principles: **Serve and Return** and **Executive Function** skills.

Serve and Return, like a game of ball, involves a back and forth conversation between you and your child where you listen, then build on and extend what your child says or does to promote learning.

Executive Function skills are skills you use to manage your attention, your feelings, your thoughts and your behavior to reach your goals.

They include being able to pay attention, remember information, think flexibly and exercise self control.

Find more about *Mind in the Making* at **www.mindinthemaking.org**.