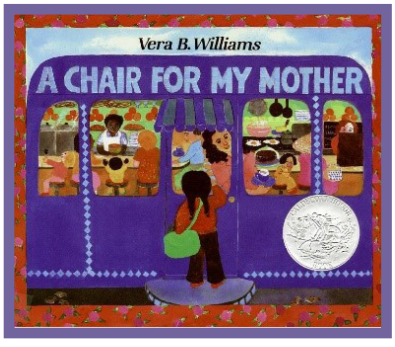
SUNCOAST CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

PRE-K



A Chair For My Mother

By Vera B. Williams

ACTIVITY: DECORATE YOUR OWN COIN JAR!

SUPPLIES:

- An empty jar (for example, an old pasta sauce jar or apple sauce jar, Pringle container, etc)
- Decorations, such as glitter
- Paper
- Tape
- Ribbon
- Glue

DIRECTIONS:

1. Make sure your container is nice and clean!
2. You can draw something on a piece of paper and then glue it to your container.
3. Tie a ribbon to it if you would like, or just keep it simple with your name on it.

Take a pic!

Take a photo of your coin jar 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): Focus and Self Control

Children need this skill in order to achieve their **goals**, especially in a world that is filled with distractions and information overload. It involves **paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly** and **exercising self control**.

Suggestions for Promoting Focus and Self Control for Ages 3-5

TIP:

As you read *A Chair for My Mother*, talk with your child about how it might feel to lose his or her things in a fire.

Rosa might have felt sad or angry but instead, she and her family focused on creating a new home and saving for a new chair. Ask your child how it would feel to save that much money.

SKILL:

The skill of Focus and Self Control is necessary as you **work toward a goal. Executive Function** skills are driven by goals.

When you talk about how Rosa and her family saved for the new chair, your child is seeing the value of working toward long-term goals. The back and forth conversation you have with your child about this book 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:

Ask your child about a goal he or she would like to work toward. Talk about what it might take to make it happen.

SKILL:

When you help your child think of a goal that he or she is interested in achieving and discuss ways to stay focused on that goal, you are helping your child learn the skill of Focus and Self Control. Make sure you help your child think about a goal he or she really cares about, not one you set for your child.

TIP:

Share a story with your child about a time that you stayed focused on a goal and had to wait to make it come true. Share your strategies for making that happen.

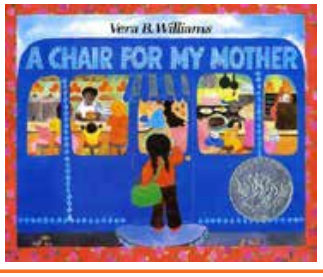
SKILL:

Children learn through stories. When you share your story and strategies, your child is learning ways to help himself or herself in the future. Focus and Self Control is promoted when **we have strategies to help us wait, not get distracted and not go on automatic, even when things are hard.**

A Chair For My Mother

By Vera B. Williams

When a fire destroys their home, Rosa, her mother and grandmother put their shiny coins into a jar until they have saved enough to buy the chair they are all dreaming of.



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**.