

SEVEN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

Skill Building Book Tips

You can read *Miss Rumphius* in a way that highlights Self-Directed, Engaged Learning, a Life Skill that promotes Executive Functions. It is through learning that we can realize our potential. As the world changes, so can we, for as long as we live—as long as we learn.

Principles of Self-Directed, Engaged Learning

- Establish a trustworthy relationship with your child.
- Help children set and work toward their own goals.
- Involve children socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- Elaborate and extend children's learning.
- Help children practice, synthesize and generalize.
- Help children become increasingly accountable.
- Create a community of learners.

TIP:

Ask your child:

- “What can we do to make the world more beautiful?”

His or her ideas don't have to be planting flowers like in *Miss Rumphius*. For example, you can suggest that smiling or laughing can make the world more beautiful.

SKILL:

Self-Directed, Engaged Learning involves **helping children apply knowledge**. When you ask your child to apply the ideas in the book to his or her own life in new ways, you are promoting this skill. This back and forth conversation you have with your child about the book 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:

Miss Rumphius had goals—to see the world and to live by the sea. Ask your child to think of a goal that matters to him or her now. Ask your child to begin to make plans to achieve that goal. In a back and forth conversation, you can also share a story of a goal you had and how you made it come true.

SKILL:

One of the key principles of promoting Self-Directed, Engaged Learning is to help children **set and then be**

Miss Rumphius

By Barbara Cooney

This is a story that spans the generations, beginning with a child named Alice Rumphius who wants to live like her grandfather—going to faraway places and living by the sea. Her grandfather tells her there is a third thing she must do: make the world more beautiful. Following in her great aunt's footsteps, little Alice has similar dreams.



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accountable for goals. Executive Function skills are driven by goals. Sharing your own stories is another way to help your child understand the importance of goals.

TIP:

You can ask your child:

- “Have you thought about a faraway place you would like to visit?”
- “Have you seen a picture of that place? What did you like about it?”
- “What do you think it would be like to visit or live there?”

See if you find additional information about that place in a book or on the Internet. What can you learn about this place together with your child?

SKILL:

Self-Directed, Engaged Learning includes **using your imagination**. It also involves **elaborating and extending children’s learning**. When you encourage children to want to know more, you are helping them become learners for life.

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