

You can read *Five Little Ducks* in a way that highlights Perspective Taking, a Life Skill that promotes Executive Functions. This Life Skill goes far beyond empathy. It involves **figuring out what others think and feel** and forms the basis for children's understanding of the intentions of their parents, teachers and friends. Children who can take the perspectives of others are also much less likely to get involved in conflicts.



TIP:

While reading this book, you can talk about what the Mother Duck might be feeling and thinking. Talk about the clues you see in the book's illustrations to understand Mother Duck's emotions.



SKILL:

Perspective Taking involves **understanding what others think and feel**. To do so, you have to put aside your own perspectives, which calls on **Executive Function** skills.



TIP:

With older children, you can help them be more attuned to the feelings of others by asking such questions as:

- “How do you think Mother Duck felt when not all of her little ducks came back? How do you know?”

Have the children look at the Mother Duck's expressions as fewer and fewer of her little ducks returned, and then look at her expressions in the fall and winter.



SKILL:

Looking at the faces and body expressions of the characters in books is an important way children learn to “read” the feelings and thoughts of others.



TIP:

At the end of the book, ask your child:

- “How does Mother Duck feel when all of the little ducks came back? How do you know?”



SKILL:

This back and forth conversation 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.

Five Little Ducks

By Raffi

Illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey

A toddler favorite, this colorful board book features a classic counting song in which, one by one, five little ducklings leave their loving duck mother. In the end (hooray!) each returns to her, trailed by a flock of surprises.



SEVEN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

Skill Building Book Tips



TIP:

With older children, this book offers many opportunities for looking at the different colors of the ducks and for counting. On the last page of the book, have your child count how many baby ducks each little duck now has.



SKILL:

Paying attention to details promotes **Executive Function** skills.



TIP:

You can talk with your child about how he or she might feel if your child was the Mother Duck or the little ducks.

Ask your child:

- “How do you think you would feel if you couldn’t find someone you were looking for?”
- “How would you feel if you were the little ducks and left home to be on your own?”



SKILL:

Perspective Taking is **learned through putting yourself in another’s “shoes.”** By talking about the **viewpoints of others**—in stories and in their own lives—you are helping children learn the skill of Perspective Taking.

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