



Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum

Program Description

Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum is a research-based curriculum that teaches social and emotional skills for violence prevention. The program is user-friendly and contains parent education components. It aims to reduce impulsive and aggressive behaviors and increase protective factors and social competence in children from preschool through junior high. Children learn how to respond empathically to others and practice skill steps for calming down, reducing anger, and solving problems. The classroom-based curriculum, organized by grade level, teaches children to practice empathy, problem-solving skills, risk assessment, decision-making, and goal-setting.

Target Audience

Second Step is classified as a universal intervention for students from preschool through ninth grade.

Special Populations/Available Adaptations

Second Step has been found to be effective in geographically diverse areas, across diverse ethnic/racial and socioeconomic student groups, and has been used in both the U.S. and Canada. Spanish language supplements are available. Evaluations of Second Step's effects on African American and Latino children have been positive.

Program Components

Second Step lessons are organized into three skill-building units that focus on: (1) empathy, (2) impulse control and problem solving, and (3) anger management. Lessons are sequential, developmentally appropriate and provide opportunities for modeling, practice, and skills reinforcement. The curriculum includes discussion, teacher modeling, coaching skills, and role plays. Stories are used to demonstrate important peer relations skills, and to teach affective, cognitive, and behavioral social skills. Lessons can be incorporated into health, science, math, social studies, and language arts.

Second Step is designed for use by school personnel, agency personnel, and those trained to work with children/adolescents in classrooms, after-school programs, mental health and agency settings. A program kit contains all needed materials.

- Pre/K–5) kits come with photo-lesson cards, Teacher's Guide, Administrator's Guide, classroom video, Family Overview Video, Take-Home Letters, and classroom posters. Pre/K kit also contains puppets and a Sing-Along Songs CD. Spanish language versions of these kits are available.
- Middle school kits are in a binder format and contain lessons, posters, classroom video, Teacher's Guide, Administrator's Guide, overhead transparencies, reproducible homework pages, and Take-Home Letter.

Lessons are designed to be used once or twice weekly and vary in length from 20 minutes at the preschool level to 50 minutes in middle school/junior high. Between 20–25 lessons are provided for each elementary grade; for middle school/junior high, there are 15 lessons in the first year and 8 lessons in the second and third years.

A Family Guide to Second Step is available for use with families of children in preschool through fifth grade who are receiving Second Step in their school or youth program. The six-session, facilitator-led program helps parents to learn about the curriculum, and assists them in reinforcing at home the skills to communicate feelings, solve problems, control anger, and deal with conflict.

Program Costs

Curriculum units are sold separately by grade level

- Grades 1-5 kits \$139
- Pre/K kit \$279
- Middle School Level I Kit \$295

Training & Technical Assistance

Committee for Children's Client Support Services provides an array of training and technical assistance services. Training on teaching the curriculum and planning implementation is highly recommended. Committee for Children offers Second Step Training for Trainers (2 1/2 days), Second Step Staff Training (1 day), and a Family Guide to Second Step Facilitator Training (2 days). Both regional and onsite training options are available. Committee for Children provides a quarterly newsletter, as well as free printed materials to assist with program selection, implementation, and on-site evaluation. Ongoing technical assistance is available toll-free by phone.

Training & Technical Assistance Costs

Committee for Children's regional Training of Trainers costs \$499 per person (\$399 if registered by discount deadline). Visit Committee for Children's website for regional training schedules and registration information. Contact Committee for Children for pricing of staff training, family guide facilitator training, or onsite training. Telephone technical assistance is available for free.

Evaluation Results

A number of evaluations of the Second Step program have been conducted. A one-year evaluation of grades 2–3 in twelve schools examined the impact of Second Step on aggression and positive social behavior. Randomly assigned pairs were matched on socioeconomic and ethnic makeup, one to a control group and the other to Second Step. Behavioral observations indicated that physical aggression and hostile and aggressive comments decreased from autumn to spring among students who were in the Second Step classrooms and increased among students in the control classrooms. Friendly behavior (including pro-social and neutral interactions) increased from autumn to spring in Second Step classrooms, but did not change in control classrooms. At a six-month follow-up, it was found that students in the Second Step classes maintained the higher levels of positive interaction and lower levels of aggression.

An evaluation of the middle school/junior high curriculum that compared students receiving the curriculum with those not receiving the intervention, on pre- and post-measures found less approval of aggression and exclusion among students receiving the intervention than for those not receiving the intervention.

The following is a summary of Second Step evaluation outcomes by grade level:

Preschool-kindergarten level:

- Decreased verbal aggression, disruptive behavior, and physical aggression
- Improved empathy skills and consequential thinking skills

Elementary school level:

- Decreased aggression on the playground and in conflict situations
- Decreased need for adult intervention
- More pro-social goal-setting
- Increased social competence and positive social behavior
- Higher levels of empathic behavior in conflict situations (girls)

Middle and junior high school level:

- Less approval for physical, verbal and relational aggression
- Increased confidence in their ability to regulate emotions and problem-solve
- Improved ability to perform social-emotional skills

Recommended Evaluation Component

Committee for Children recommends developing a plan to include evaluation early in the process of program adoption. Recommendations for program evaluation are available at the Committee for Children's website at: www.cfchildren.org/eduf/fundf/progeval.

Agency/Institution Recognition

- Center for Mental Health Services- Greenberg et al: Effective Program
- Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP): Model Program
- Department of Education- Safe Schools: Exemplary Program
- Communities That Care- Developmental Research and Programs: Effective Program
- Title V (OJJDP): Exemplary Program

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