

Building Social Emotional Skills through the Second Step/Early Learning Program

The *Second Step* early learning program is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase children's school readiness and social success by building their social-emotional competence and self-regulation skills. It supports skill development in four key areas of social-emotional competence: **empathy and compassion, emotion management, friendship skills and problem solving, and Skills for Learning**. Equipping children with *Second Step* skills helps ease their transition to kindergarten and sets them up for success in school and life.

Benefits are enhanced when these 3 goals are met:

- The 2nd Step philosophy (empathy, respect, emotional management etc.) is "lived" by the adults and exhibited in their behaviors.
- The program is integrated and reinforced throughout the day, and not taught as stand-alone lessons.
- Parents are involved.

Another benefit to using this curriculum program-wide is the creation of a common language enabling everyone from teaching teams to specialists to parents to reinforce these important skills in a more consistent, coherent way, across all parts of a child's life.

Link to video overview of the program.... <http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step.aspx>

Link to purchase the kit... <http://store.cfchildren.org/isecond-stepi-early-learning-grade-8-c63.aspx>

Even without the kit you can reinforce the development of these critical social emotional skills by helping children:

- identify and understand their own and others' feelings by learning feeling words and looking for clues on someone else's face and body.
- begin to see things from perspectives other than their own by understanding that other people can have the same or different feelings about the same thing and understanding that sometimes things happen by accident.
- show care and concern for others by saying something kind or doing something to help someone else.
- calm down strong feelings before trying to solve problems by putting their hands on their tummies and saying "stop", naming their feeling and taking belly breaths.

Reading specific books can also reinforce these important skills. See reverse for suggested titles.

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Books that Reinforce Social/Emotional Skill Building

A to Z: Do You Ever Feel Like Me? by Bonnie Hausman. Illustrated by Sandi Fellman. Each letter of the alphabet features a photo of a child expressing a different emotion. (emotions)

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst. Illustrated by Ray Cruz. Alexander is having a bad day. Nothing seems to be going his way. Use this book to help children learn to focus on what is happening as a way for them to identify how someone feels. Available in Spanish: *Alexander y el día terrible, horrible, espantoso, horroroso*. (calming down, emotion management, feelings, identifying feelings, strong feelings)

Andrew's Angry Words by Dorothea Lachner. Illustrated by Thé Tjong-Khing. After his sister accidentally bumps him, Andrew shouts angry words, which take on a life of their own and affect all those who encounter them. (accidents, feelings change, identifying feelings)

Cleversticks by Bernard Ashley. Illustrated by Derek Brazell. Just when it seems like he is the only person in his class who doesn't have a talent, Ling Sung realizes he has a skill none of his other classmates have mastered. (feelings change, frustration, identifying feelings)

Cool Down and Work Through Anger by Cheri J. Meiners. This simple, child-friendly book offers many examples of children experiencing and calming down their anger. (anger, calming down, emotion management, problem solving, strong feelings)

Emily's Sharing and Caring Book by Cindy Post Senning and Peggy Post. Illustrated by Leo Landry. Two young friends demonstrate different ways of sharing, taking turns, and being nice and polite to others. (caring, fair ways to play, sharing, having fun with your friends, problem solving, taking turns)

Everybody Has Feelings: Todos Tenemos Sentimientos by Charles E. Avery. A book of photographs. (emotions)

Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Kraus. Illustrated by Jose Aruego. Leo the lion can't seem to do anything right, but with time, and his mother's understanding, he blooms. Available in Spanish: *Leo el capullo tardío*. (similarities and differences)

A Little Peace by Barbara Kerley. This National Geographic book contains beautiful color photos along with simple text showing children around the world working toward peace in different ways. (caring, compassion, empathy, helping, kindness, understanding perspectives)

Engage in "extended discourse" by asking questions that go beyond the here and now...."what do you think is happening--has anything like this ever happened to you?... "how is this character feeling?"..."how can you tell?"..."have you ever felt like that?"..."how is the character showing he or she cares?"..."is the character having a strong feeling?"..."what is the character doing to calm down?"..."what is the problem these characters are having—what are some things they could do?"...