

Second Step Curriculum

A Parent's Reference • Kindergarten–Grade 8

WHAT IS SECOND STEP?

Second Step is our school's social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, published by Committee for Children. It teaches skills for learning, managing emotions, building empathy, and solving problems — helping students succeed academically, socially, and behaviorally. It's used in tens of thousands of schools and is backed by decades of research.

HOW IT'S ORGANIZED

- Grades K–5 (Second Step Elementary): four units per grade — Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting, Emotion Management, Empathy & Kindness, and Problem-Solving — each with five short, teacher-led lessons.
- Grades 6–8 (Second Step Middle School): four units per grade, delivered digitally, with about 26 lessons across the year, each 20–25 minutes long.
- Lessons build year over year, so skills introduced in kindergarten are revisited and deepened through 8th grade.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL PRACTICE

- Skills for Learning — listening, focusing attention, following directions, and staying on task
- Emotion Management — recognizing and calming strong feelings like frustration or worry
- Empathy & Kindness — understanding others' perspectives and responding with compassion
- Problem-Solving — working through conflicts and making thoughtful decisions
- Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting — learning from mistakes and setting personal goals (heavier emphasis in upper grades)

WHY IT MATTERS

Research on Second Step links the program to reduced aggression and problem behavior, stronger empathy and social skills, and improved school climate. In middle school, it also supports academic motivation and helps students navigate peer relationships and stronger emotions as they head into adolescence.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME

- Ask your child what "skill of the week" or unit they're working on — many concepts (like naming feelings or "STEP" problem-solving) transfer well to home conversations.
- Model calm-down strategies and name your own emotions out loud when appropriate.
- Reinforce goal-setting by helping your child set and track small personal goals.
- Reach out to your child's teacher or counselor with questions about what's being taught this year.

Questions? Contact your child's teacher or school counselor — we're glad to share more about the Second Step lessons your student is learning this year.