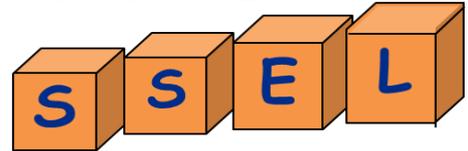




SECOND STEP NEWSLETTER

KIDSTEPS II

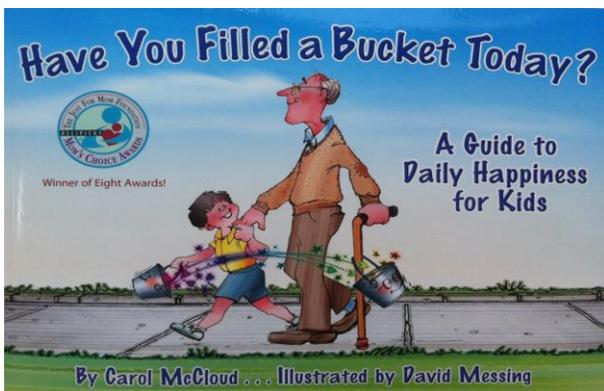


Second Step Early Learning Curriculum

Our first newsletter is a collection of stories about Second Step classroom experiences. We are grateful to you for sharing your experiences to help us create this newsletter. Each story captures an unexpected moment of surprise, delight, and making a difference!

Calm Down

"Two children were playing in the block area. One child wanted to play with the toy car being used by another child. When the first child was denied the toy, he had a tantrum. A child from a different area came over and told that child, 'take belly breaths, calm down, and then ask nicely to play with the car, like Mary and John (our puppets).' The child took belly breaths, calmed down, asked nicely, and received the car!"



Have you Filled Your Bucket Today?

"The book 'Have you Filled your Bucket Today?' by Carol McCloud has really worked for us. We incorporated 'bucket filling' and 'bucket dipping' throughout the year. The children really took to it and will tell other children if they are being a 'Bucket Filler' or a 'Bucket Dipper.' We use it when we see someone doing something kind and when we see someone doing something unkind. We read the book every time someone new starts in our classroom so they know what we mean when we say, 'you're a 'Bucket Filler' or a 'Bucket Dipper.'"

I Am Lucky to Have You

"There has been a child in our class who seems to have benefitted the most from Second Step. He didn't interact much with others and was very unsocial. He didn't participate much during group time. Most of his interests involved war games and weapons. Mom was having difficulty with him at home acting hyper, having screaming outbursts and saying threatening things to family members. When Mom is working, her son is in the care of grandparents who give in to him a lot! She came to see us, and really didn't know what to do. We gave her some suggestions and hoped things would get better. Since we introduced Second Step, this child has come leaps and bounds! He interacts with others appropriately, does not pretend to use weapons, and has very polite manners. Mom told us that while at home, her son said to her, 'you know mom, I really appreciate everything you do. You do a lot for me and I am lucky to have you.' Mom was so taken aback with emotion because her son had never said anything like this before. In the classroom, he participates in circle time, helps others name their emotions, and is even writing his name! He is affectionate toward teachers giving hugs and even helps resolve conflict if it arises."

An Egg-cellent Exchange

"Last week, one child came into the dramatic play area and wanted to play with some colored eggs another child had. Ordinarily, this child would have grabbed the eggs and the other child would have screamed. This time, he entered and asked politely if he could have a turn with the eggs. The other child said, 'yes, when I am done' and he said, 'okay - let me know'. After the child finished playing, the teacher had to remind her about the other child who wanted a turn. She immediately went over with the eggs and said, 'I'm done with them, you can use them now.' They both smiled and he said, 'thank you' and she said, 'you're welcome.' "

****A child is more ready for school when she can control her impulses and follow directions. The good news is that self-regulation skills can be taught.***



Stop!

"There was a child in our room who was upset. Another child reminded him to 'Stop' and say how he was feeling. The child was then told to take belly breaths."

Let's Play Together

"During the small group activity where we broke into partners to practice inviting others to play, two children were having trouble deciding where to go to play together. The boy wanted to go to one area and his partner (a girl) wanted to go to a different area. I had them stay at the small group table until they made a choice together. While I worked with another pair, I heard this boy and girl discussing options. When I came back to ask them where they would practice playing together, they said they would go first to her choice and then to his. They came to this decision without adult assistance and I told them what they did was 'compromise' and it was a great idea! The boy then said he was glad because they found a way together to do what each other wanted."

**The ability to self-regulate helps children get along better with teachers and their peers. Aspects of self-regulation are more important for school readiness than academic aspects like letter knowledge.*

Fair Ways to Play

"A child came to me and said, 'Mrs. Teacher, come to the block area.' I joined her there and she told me to sit down, handed me a toy, and whispered in my ear, 'when I say I want the toy, you say: no, you can't have it. OK?' I did exactly as she said. She looked at me and said 'please can I have a turn after?' I said, 'OK, when my turn is done I will give you a turn.' The child then got another toy and said 'you can have my toy when I have that.' She was thrilled when I thanked her for helping me remember fair ways to play!"

Partnering with Parents

"I had a foster parent approach me one morning asking if I yell at the kids saying, "Stop, I feel angry". Every time the child was asked to do something at home, they would yell at the foster parent, 'Stop, I feel mad.' I had to explain to the parent what we were doing in the classroom using Second Step. He said he usually doesn't read the mail sent home (Homelinks) - he just throws it away....."



**Brain builders are designed to build parts of children's brains that help them develop executive functioning skills. Research links these skills to school readiness and later academic achievement. Brain builders can be used successfully to improve children's self-regulation skills.*

Bullies Beware

"Every year our program participates in a Child Abuse Prevention program. The children were role playing a playground bully situation in which they were encouraged to stand up for themselves and firmly say, 'no' to the bully who was taking away the shovel. When one child had her turn to say, 'no, I'm going to tell the teacher," she recalled a Second Step lesson and instead said, 'you can have a turn when I am done with it.' The other children in her group agreed. 'Yeah, you have to wait for your turn!' "



**Early learning settings focusing on developing children's self-regulation and social-emotional competence can help prevent negative outcomes, such as expulsion from preschool, and get children ready to succeed in school.*

Let's Trade

"One of the most successful concepts brought into my room is that of 'TRADE.' Children have learned new skills that will help them negotiate waiting and taking turns when playing with others. We hear them say, 'I have this, can we switch?' If not one, how about two?" These are important lifelong skills."

**Children who learn social-emotional skills early in life are more self-confident, trusting, empathic, intellectually inquisitive, competent in using language to communicate, and capable of relating well to others.*

The Power of Belly Breaths

"A particularly busy, excitable, fly-off-the-handle child found herself in an upsetting social situation. Instead of screaming across the classroom, she walked over to me, put her hands on her belly, took two deep breaths, used self-talk saying, 'state the problem' and calmly said what happened. I was so excited to see her use the lessons from Second Step that I expressed my pride and excitement with her. She was so proud of herself that she forgot what upset her!"

Building Blocks

"My small group lesson was focused on inviting children to play. I invited five children that usually don't play together to join me at my table. One of the children who is very shy and quiet went over to the playdough center and invited one of the boys to play with him in the block area. The boy responded with a 'yes' but continued to stay at the playdough table. The boy who did the inviting waited patiently until the other boy stopped playing with the playdough and then they both walked over to the blocks and built towers."