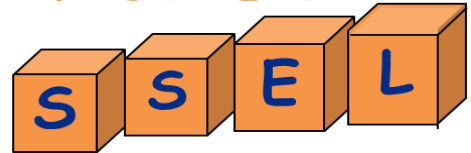




## SECOND STEP NEWSLETTER

June 2016

### KIDSTEPS II



Second Step Early Learning Curriculum

This newsletter is a collection of stories about your 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.



### Teacher, Teacher

We leave the Second Step cards out at circle time. Several times I have seen children pretending to read the cards and recite what they have learned to their peers sitting in circle. One child plays teacher and the others are the students.

MOC Hosmer

### "Aaargh!!"

We were working on identifying strong feelings and were talking about naming how we feel. We explained to the children what feeling frustrated is. We told them that it's when you keep trying to do something but just can't quite get it. Later, after circle and breakfast, we had a small group activity. One little boy was having a difficult time with accomplishing the activity. He said "Aaargh" in a loud voice. I said "Oooh, it sounds like someone in our classroom is feeling frustrated!". The little boy raised his hand and calmly said "Yeah, it's me. I'm feeling frustrated! I need to calm my body down and then ask for help."

MOC Leominster

*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.*

### It Was An Accident...

We watched two children playing on the playground. One child became upset. Her friend asked her, "Are you OK?" She replied, "No, I am feeling so sad." The friend asked, "Why are you so sad?" She replied, "Because I was running and I fell down." Her friend asked again, "Are you OK? It was an accident." She again replied, "No, I'm not OK, I'm sad!" Her friend said, "Well, you can say stop! I feel sad, and then take some belly breaths." She showed her how to follow the calm down steps and the child copied her and then said, "Thank you, I feel better."

MOC Leominster

*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.*



### Transitions

During clean up and transition to circle there tends to be some commotion. One particular child will start singing the listening rules and the rest of the children will join in the rhyme. They will then independently settle themselves on the rug without any teacher prompting.

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Granite St.

### Story Card Surprise

Using the Second Step program throughout the school year was challenging at times but seeing the results in our classroom made the time spent preparing and learning the curriculum worthwhile. The children looked forward each week to helping our puppets (Sammie and Albert) with whatever scenario they were encountering. My most memorable moment came recently when the children were able to discuss the story card without me reading any of the story line! The children were able to recall the calm down rules and problem-solving steps. They offered advice on remembering how to use a strong, respectful voice. I look forward to using this tool next year and can't wait to see another class gain meaningful social skills.

Mill Swan A

### Calm Down!

Four children were playing at the water table. All of a sudden there was an uproar when one child wanted a bucket from another child and grabbed it from his hands. The battle began as the two children pulled back and forth. The third child put his hands on his belly and said "It will be OK - just put your hands on your belly and take a belly breath like this". The other three children stopped and took belly breaths and the battle was over.

MOC Hosmer

*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.*

### Caring Counts

A child arrived to class feeling upset. One little girl went up to him and asked what was wrong.

She told him to say what was wrong out loud and then she put her hands on her belly and told him to belly breathe.

MOC Hosmer

*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.*



### How Are You Feeling Now?

While in a small group, children were given a scenario and asked to choose a feeling card that tells how they were feeling. One child picked-up the Scared Feelings card and talked about the monster under his bed. Another child said without prompting "You don't have to feel scared - there are no monsters under your bed or in the classroom!" The teacher then asked "How are you feeling now?" The child picked up the Happy feeling card. This child does not often express himself or have verbal exchanges with other children. It was a great experience to see!

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## The Power of Learning

A child in my class struggles with anger issues and developmental delays. He responds to situations by yelling at teachers, yelling in children's faces, and hitting. He is starting to retain some of the Second Step techniques and uses them when situations occur. When he says he is angry, he will use the belly breaths. He is hitting less because he can express himself using Second Step language. He is starting to ask other children if he can play with them instead of taking things and hurting them. The Second Step CD is very effective in helping him comprehend the concepts and keeping him attentive.

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*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.*

## Getting to Know Each Other

The unit on identifying feelings included working in small groups during lunch or snack. I found this to be one of my favorite activities. It's very useful for a child who is introverted. One child in our classroom gets easily embarrassed and uncomfortable and rarely participates. When I completed the small group lunch activity, the child was expressive and comfortable sharing information. Overall, I found this activity a great way to help children be attentive, respectful, and able to relate to each other. It was a great way for all of us to get to know each other!

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