



Leaning into Second Step®

Second Step, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As communities around the world grapple with this unprecedented public health crisis, educators are facing uncharted waters. Some districts are quickly shifting to remote learning, while others close altogether. Even in schools unaffected by COVID-19 educators, students, and families alike are dealing with stress and uncertainty about what's next.

So it can be easy to lose track of SEL instruction—but times like these are when it's critical that we support the social-emotional needs of everyone involved, in any way we can. Teachers and schools can still be an important source of support for students during this time. Here, you'll find ways to use the skills taught in the Second Step program to provide support for students and help them support each other.

Using SEL to Support Students

Provide Opportunities to Process

It is important to acknowledge that the situation is happening and give students an opportunity to process everything they're experiencing.

- Invite students to write or draw about their experience if they wish to, so that they know it is not a taboo topic.
- Facilitate online discussions about the experience of being at home during this time. Make sure to create a sense of safety and connection before beginning these discussions. If you become aware of a student being triggered by these conversations, make sure to connect with them after the meeting using your usual communication means. If warranted, alert a family member to the student's response to these discussions. End these discussions with students identifying one fun thing they can do at home that helps them feel calm and happy.

Second Step Skills

Second Step, as a social-emotional learning program, is designed to provide students with the skills they need to navigate through both school and life challenges. The following skills taught in Second Step will help students

while they are at home during the pandemic.

Identifying and Talking About Their Emotions

Both the empathy and emotion management units have lessons about identifying emotions.

Students may have a hard time identifying the exact emotions they are feeling—and that's normal. It is not critical to have exact names for emotions, but it can be helpful for students to describe how they feel. Use lessons in the emotion management unit to help them do this, and reassure students that the range of emotions they may be experiencing—and any worry, anxiety, anger, or fear—are normal for such a situation.

- It may help to explain fear as a normal emotion that can remind us to do things to keep ourselves safe, like remembering to wash hands frequently and keep an appropriate distance between people to stay healthy.

Helping Students Manage Emotions and Anxiety

Even if students don't fully understand what is happening, they are aware of how the situation is affecting the adults in their lives. It can be helpful to teach or go back over lessons that deal with anxiety and managing strong emotions. It may also help to work with students on how they can use what they

learned and practiced in the lessons to manage their feelings around COVID-19 and not being in school.

Early Learning:

- **Lesson 13:** We Feel Feelings in Our Bodies (Identify worry and an adult to talk to)
- **Lesson 14:** Strong Feelings (Recognizing and managing strong feelings)
- **Lesson 15:** Naming Feelings (How to calm down)
- **Lesson 16:** Managing Disappointment (Includes belly breathing)

Kindergarten:

- **Lesson 12:** We Feel Feelings in Our Bodies (Identify physical clues of feeling worried and an adult to talk to)
- **Lesson 13:** Managing Frustration ("Stop" and "Name your feelings" as calming-down strategies)
- **Lesson 14:** Calming Down Strong Feelings (Belly breathing and Calming-Down Steps)
- **Lesson 15:** Handling Waiting (Using the Calming-Down Steps to manage waiting)

Grade 1:

- **Lesson 12:** Identifying Our Own Feelings (Identifying feelings in the body; identifying grownups to talk to about feelings)
- **Lesson 13:** Strong Feelings (Using Calming-Down Steps)
- **Lesson 14:** Calming Down Anger (Recognizing physical signs of anger and using belly breathing)
- **Lesson 15:** Self-Talk for Calming Down (Recognizing situations that require calming-down strategies and using positive self-talk)
- **Lesson 16:** Managing Worry (Recognizing situations that require calming down; demonstrating belly breathing, counting, and self-talk; identifying an adult to talk to)

Grade 2:

- **Lesson 11:** Introducing Emotion Management (Identifying physical cues for strong feelings; identifying adults to talk to about feelings)
- **Lesson 14:** Managing Anxious Feelings (Using positive self-talk)

Grade 3:

- **Lesson 11:** Introducing Emotion Management (Identifying physical cues that can help name

strong feelings)

- **Lesson 12:** Managing Test Anxiety (Identifying and demonstrating the first two Calming-Down Steps)
- **Lesson 15:** Managing Anger (Using counting as a calming-down strategy and assertive communication)

Grade 4:

- **Lesson 10:** Introducing Emotion Management (Identifying triggers for strong emotions; what strong feelings do in brains & bodies)
- **Lesson 11:** Managing Strong Feelings (Interrupting escalating emotions; identifying strong feelings as they occur)
- **Lesson 12:** Calming Down Anger (Demonstrating deep breathing, counting, using positive self-talk)
- **Lesson 13:** Managing Anxiety (Identifying anxiety-causing situations and applying calming-down steps)

Grade 5:

- **Lesson 9:** Introducing Emotion Management (Describing the effects of strong emotions on brains and bodies; identifying and naming strong feelings)
- **Lesson 10:** Calming Down (Demonstrating deep breathing and other Calming-Down Steps)
- **Lesson 11:** Managing Anxiety (Identifying scenarios and applying Calming-Down Steps to anxiety)
- **Lesson 12:** Managing Frustration (Demonstrating how to reduce frustration using Calming-Down Steps)

Grade 6:

- **Lesson 13:** What are Emotions? (Analyzing how feelings affect decision-making)
- **Lesson 15:** Spot the Thought (Recognizing the difference between thoughts & feelings; identifying and mitigating unhelpful thoughts)
- **Lesson 16:** Calming Down (Identifying and creating a plan for using calming-down strategies)
- **Lesson 17:** Slow Breathing (Practicing and making a plan for using slow breathing to stay calm)

Grade 7:

- **Lesson 13:** The Role of Emotions (Learning why adolescent emotions are especially strong; analyzing how emotions affect decision making)
- **Lesson 14:** Handling Emotions (Recognizing that emotions don't have to control decision-making; apply values)
- **Lesson 15:** Unhelpful Thoughts (Identifying and mitigating unhelpful thoughts; explaining connections between thoughts, emotions, and decisions)
- **Lesson 16:** Be Calm (Identifying calming-down strategies and explaining why they're effective)
- **Lesson 17:** Frustration (Recognizing common sources of frustration and making plans for handling frustration)

Grade 8:

- **Lesson 13:** Emotions & Decisions (Analyze how emotions affect decision-making)
- **Lesson 16:** Stay Calm (Identify calming-down strategies and explain why they're effective)
- **Lesson 17:** Anxiety (Identify common sources of anxiety and create a plan for handling it)

Using Emotion-Management Strategies

Lessons in the Emotion Management units teach a variety of calming-down strategies. In particular, the following emotion-management strategies are very helpful.

Belly Breathing :

- Remind students to breathe in slowly through the nose and out through the mouth. A slow exhale stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system. A variation of belly breathing is to breathe in a memory of feeling safe and happy and breathe out the uncomfortable, pandemic-related feelings.
- Begin and end remote lessons with a short belly breathing session.
- *Called slow breathing in the Middle School Program*

Slow Counting

Positive Self-Talk

- Help students identify negative self-talk related to the pandemic.

- Discuss helpful or positive self-talk that they could use instead.
- Have them re-appraise or re-frame the situation. Help them understand that they are at home in order to keep themselves and other people safe. In other words, they are doing something very caring and helpful for their family and their community.

Asking for Help and Getting Support

There is at least one lesson at every grade level that focuses on getting help or support from an adult when experiencing strong emotions. It's very important that students know that they do not have to cope on their own.

- Teach or re-teach lessons on getting help; ask students how they can use what they're learning and practicing during this time at home.
- Have students write down the names of two or three people that they can reach out to for support either in person in their homes, or via their phones or online.

Showing Empathy and Kindness

Lessons in the Empathy unit at all grade levels teach students how to identify what others are feeling and to show their care and concern with acts of kindness. Have students reflect on how being at home because of COVID-19 is a kind and helpful act.

- Remind students that others can have the same or different feelings about being at home, or about the pandemic (perspective-taking).
- Have students reflect on how it feels when someone else has empathy for them—when another person feels and understands how they feel.
- Have students identify acts of kindness or support that would feel helpful to them as individuals during this time.
- Have students identify acts of kindness or support they can offer each other and their families while they are at home.

Addressing Racism, Prejudice, and Xenophobia

The COVID-19 pandemic has made many people understandably fearful of infection. An unfortunate

side effect of this is a rise in bullying and harassment of people perceived as being carriers of the disease based on ethnicity, homeland, or recent travel history. If this issue appears among your students, it is very important to address it directly. These classroom meeting templates from our Bullying Prevention Unit provide a structured way to address these issues, with generic activities you can adapt to meet the specific needs of your school and students.

Kindergarten–Grade 3:

- [Empathy Helps Stop Bullying](#)
- [Including Others](#)

Grade 4–Grade 5:

- [Racial, Ethnic & Religious Bullying](#)
- [Prejudice](#)

Adapting Second Step for Remote Learning

Mix Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

The interactive conversational format of Second Step lessons may not translate well into online learning. Consider ways to reimagine lessons to mix live participation with activities students can do on their own.

Songs (EL-5)

Leading live sing-alongs is a great way to inject movement into online classes. Songs are also a great way for families to reinforce concepts at home.

Brain Builders (EL-3)

These are excellent activities to do through live video conferencing. Use them whenever you want to get your class moving.

Introduction (4-5)

Turn this activity into a short writing prompt or quiz students do on their own.

Story and Discussion (EL-5)

Share the story live (you can access the media on SecondStep.org) and turn the discussion into work students do on their own. After students have answered the discussion questions, you can

Adapting to Remote Learning

Use these strategies to support your students' social-emotional needs through remote learning.

Family Access to K-5 Songs, Photos, and Videos

Through June 30, 2020, families can access K-5 lesson media through the Families tab of SecondStep.org. Instructions for how families can create an account are in each grade level's Family Letter. Find Family Letters by clicking Resources on your Dashboard, then clicking Downloads in the blue navigation bar at the top of the page. Once families are registered you can either ask them to log in and navigate to the media, or you can send them direct links to the specific songs, photos, and videos you'd like them to see.

Livestreaming and Recording Lessons

You're permitted to livestream and record yourself teaching Second Step lessons. All recordings must be stored in a password-protected location and taken down by June 30, 2020. Please see the full terms and conditions at the bottom of this document.

have them share their answers with each other in whichever way is most convenient.

Skill Practice/Activity (K-5)

Consider substituting the Home Link activity for skill practice.

Second Step Middle School Program

The Second Step Middle School Program lends itself well to live instruction. Open the lesson player, share your screen with your class, and teach the lesson as you normally would.

The class meetings from the advisory program can be done live or easily adapted for students to do on their own. You can turn them into individual reflection prompts, or post the questions on a discussion board for students to respond to at their own pace.

Strategies for Integrating SEL into Remote Instruction

Use Live Video Conferencing When Possible

Show you're okay and demonstrate a positive growth mindset. Model strong SEL skills for your students. Acknowledge and name one or two feelings you're having about the current situation and explain how you're positively managing your emotions (through positive self-talk, belly breathing, talking to your family, getting enough sleep, and so on).

Engage with Your Students

Regularly check in with your students about how they're feeling. Give students opportunities, both publicly and in private, to discuss their feelings about the situation. Use words and concepts from Second Step to help them manage their emotions. Encourage students to talk with their families about how they're feeling.

Maintain a Regular Routine

This will help your online classroom feel as safe and supportive as your regular one.

Provide Social Time

Students may feel isolated, lonely, or bored. Providing lightly structured time when they can virtually hang out and socialize with friends may help.

Consider Using SMS or Messaging Services to Connect with Students and Families

For many students and families, messaging through phones is the best way to communicate digitally. A number of services, such as Edmodo, Google Classroom, and ClassDojo, offer the ability to message students and families in ways that are HIPAA, COPPA, and FERPA compliant.

SEL When School Is Closed

Resources Available Through SecondStep.org

Resources for families to help support their children's social-emotional development are available on SecondStep.org. Families can use the registration activation key in the Second Step introduction letter to access the following materials:

Brain Builders (K-3)

Families can use these fun activities at home just like you use them in the classroom.

Home Links

These simple activities (available in both English and Spanish) provide families with a concrete way to support their children's social-emotional development. The activities also give families a structured framework for having meaningful conversations—something that's very important during uncertain times.

Problem-Solving Support

This may be a very stressful time for families. Families can use the problem-solving flow charts and mini-posters as tools to work through a variety of issues that may arise.

Songs

Families can now access Second Step songs. These are great ways for families to have fun and reinforce SEL skills at the same time.

Book Lists

During extended school closures, many families will appreciate recommended reading for their children.

Resources from Committee for Children

There are also additional resources from Committee for Children that families can access. These include:

The Imagine Neighborhood

This new podcast for families is designed to help children and grown-ups build their social-emotional skills. Each episode tells a story that's amazing, fantastical, and maybe a little bananas, while it tackles the big feelings that come with growing up.

Mind Yeti

Fifteen of our mindfulness program sessions are now available free for anyone to use, no experience necessary! Designed explicitly for educators and families to do alongside younger children, or for older children to do on their own, Mind Yeti provides a great way for everyone to practice mindfulness during this difficult time.

- Mind Yeti on Vimeo: [English, Spanish](#)
- Mind Yeti on YouTube: [English, Spanish](#)
- Mind Yeti Podcast: [RSS Feed](#), [Spotify](#), [Stitcher](#)

Little Children, Big Challenges

Committee for Children and Sesame Street have partnered to create a collection of resources for young children facing significant challenges. These materials, aimed at build children's resilience, may be useful for educators and families.

Captain Compassion

Here, children can find games, comics, and activities they can do on their own, or with their families, to learn about how they can help stop bullying.

Hot Chocolate Talk

This is a resource to help families talk with their children about child sexual abuse. Families may be spending a lot more time together during school closures, which makes this an opportune time to have these difficult but important conversations.

ParentTeen Connect

For families with older children, this resource provides an online experience they can share together. It's loaded with videos, resources, and useful advice to help teens and the adults in their lives address hot-button topics.

Regularly check in with your students about how they're feeling. Give students opportunities, both publicly and in private, to discuss their feelings about the situation. Use words and concepts from Second Step to help them manage their emotions. Encourage students to talk with their families about how they're feeling.

Take Care of Yourself

It can be hard to find the time or energy for self-care during a crisis, but it's important that you take care of yourself first so you're able to support your students. Finding ways to take care of yourself and manage your own emotions first is akin to adults putting on their oxygen masks before helping children with theirs. Here are some self-care strategies:

- Take time each day to notice what you're feeling and use an emotion-management strategy to find calm.
- Check in on your self-talk and reframe the situation in positive ways as best you can.
- Identify and reach out to people who can provide you with support. Connect with them on a regular basis.
- The Second Step skills listed earlier in this guide can be helpful for you as well.

Stay Connected

If your school is closed, or your community is under travel or public-gathering restrictions, try and find ways to connect with your friends, family, and colleagues. These connections will help you maintain your own social-emotional health.

There are also online communities you can join to get both professional and personal support from fellow educators around the world. Some of these communities include:

Educator Temporary School Closure for Online Learning

- A group dedicated to crowdsourcing effective strategies for educators who are making a sudden switch to online learning.

Second Step Educators Community

- A great place to connect with other educators using Second Step, many of whom are working through issues similar to your own.

Extended Permission Through June 30, 2020, for Remote Educator Presentation of Second Step® Student Lessons

Committee for Children ("**CFC**") understands that many educators are looking for ways to share social-emotional support with their students during this challenging time. Due to the spread of COVID-19, we know there is a growing need for many schools to provide instruction and classroom materials online.

If you have access to your Second Step® curricula and teaching materials, CFC is expanding permission to use these materials for secure, remote presentation of student lessons on the **Terms & Conditions** below, through **June 30, 2020**. This extended permission allows you to:

- Pre-record your student lessons;
- Live-stream and simultaneously record your student lessons;
- Upload a recording of each student lesson to a password-protected environment; and
- Use password-protected recordings for any student lesson in your school that is permitted under your Second Step® license with CFC

Except for permitting remote student lessons, the scope of your Second Step® license is unchanged. This means you do not have permission to make copies of, remotely share, or modify the Second Step® curricula or related teaching materials or use these materials for schools, classrooms or students not already covered.

The full **Terms & Conditions** applicable to this extended permission are below.

Terms & Conditions of Extended Permission Through June 30, 2020

These Terms & Conditions apply if we've granted prior permission for you to use our print or digital curricula and related teaching materials (collectively the "**Materials**") in your classroom(s) (the "**Permitted Use**"). The Permitted Use was granted either pursuant to a written license agreement between you and CFC, or under CFC's "Terms of Use" located at <https://www.cfchildren.org/terms-of-use/> (the "**Original Agreement**").

If you are now offering classes remotely, CFC is extending the Permitted Use of the Materials to allow you to pre-record or livestream and simultaneously record your student lessons. Both pre-recorded and recorded livestream lessons (collectively, the "**Recordings**") may be posted on a password-protected environment, such as a non-public server or learning management system (LMS) (the "**Extended Permission**") through **June 30, 2020** (the "**Extension Term**"). A single Recording may be used by more than one educator at your school for any student lesson that is permitted under the Original Agreement.

Permitted Use of the Materials does not include making copies of, remotely sharing, or modifying the Materials or use of the Materials or Recordings for schools, classrooms or students not already covered under the Original Agreement. The Original Agreement still governs the scope of your use of the Materials during the Extension Term and beyond (i.e., the same licensed number of students, classrooms, grade levels, etc.). The Extended Permission is conditioned upon your compliance with the Original Agreement in all respects.

The Extended Permission will expire at the end of the Extension Term (i.e., **June 30, 2020**). Following the Extension Term, the Original Agreement will fully govern your permitted scope of use of the Materials moving forward. CFC will own all rights in the Recordings, and the Recordings should be taken down and no longer used after the Extension Term expires. CFC reserves all rights in and to the Materials and the Recordings not expressly granted in the Original Agreement or this Extended Permission.