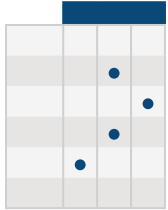second STEP®

ALIGNMENT CHART

Second Step® Elementary Digital Program and Second Step® Out-of-School Time

Program Similarities

The Second Step Elementary digital program and Second Step Out-of-School Time were developed concurrently and through close collaboration between the program teams. The programs' units and strategies are aligned because both programs focus on teaching core social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies and are designed to support foundational executive-function skills. The programs use aligned language to support their unique activities and lessons, providing consistency and reinforcement as children learn and practice social-emotional skills both in and out of school.

Program Differences

While the Second Step Elementary digital program and Second Step Out-of-School Time are aligned in many ways, there are some intentional differences between the programs. Although both programs focus on core social-emotional skills and utilize best practices for supporting these skills, each program has the structure and sequence that best aligns with its respective environment.

Second Step® Out-of-School Time Includes a Unit on Building Relationships and Community

Because out-of-school time (OST) groups are often comprised of students of different ages who may spend less consistent time together than classmates, Second Step Out-of-School Time starts with a unit that helps OST groups establish a shared culture. The **Foundational Unit: Community Building** helps OST facilitators create positive relationships and community rules and norms. By contrast, most elementary teachers already have norm-setting

activities and systems in place for community building in their classrooms, many of which stem from districtwide and schoolwide initiatives, so the Second Step Elementary digital program begins with **Unit 1: Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting**.

The Second Step® Elementary Digital Program Includes a Unit on Problem-Solving

Second Step Out-of-School Time activities provide intentional opportunities for children to encounter and strategically solve problems. However, they do not include the type of direct instruction on problem-solving that's present in the Second Step® Elementary digital program's **Unit 4: Problem-Solving**. The classroom offers a more structured environment that better suits the teaching of a formal problem-solving process by allowing students the time and space needed to explore and connect each part of the four-step process.

Different Approaches to Executive-Function Skills

Both programs are designed to support the development of core executive-function skills—working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility—but each approaches this goal differently. Most lessons in the Second Step Elementary digital program begin with an embedded Brain Builder video that strengthens children's executive-function skills through interactive exercises and movement activities. Second Step Out-of-School Time activities don't include Brain Builders, but instead are designed to strengthen children's executive-function skills through explicit instruction and by providing children with opportunities to practice executive-function skills during the activities.

Alignment of Key Skills in the Second Step® Elementary Digital Program and Second Step® Out-of-School Time Program

Content	Key Skills	Second Step® Elementary Digital Program	Second Step® Out-of-School Time
Executive-Function Skills	Working memory	✔	✔
	Inhibitory control	✔	✔
	Cognitive flexibility	✔	✔
Community Building	Collaboratively create and follow community rules and group norms		✔
	Pay attention and listen to others to learn about them		✔
	Participate in their community by sharing ideas, working together, and supporting others		✔
Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting	Focus attention to learn, stay safe, and ignore distractions	✔	✔
	Persevere through challenges	✔	✔
	Improve skills through practice and effort	✔	✔
	Understand that mistakes are part of learning and how to handle them	✔	✔
	Encourage one's self and others when mistakes are made (using growth mindset language)	✔	✔
	Set goals and make plans to reach a goal	✔	✔
	Monitor progress and modify a plan to reach a goal	✔	✔
	Understand that the brain can grow and change when they learn and practice new skills	✔	
	Share their skills with others in their community		✔

Content	Key Skills	Second Step® Elementary Digital Program	Second Step® Out-of-School Time
Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting	Support others to achieve individual and group goals		✔
	Collaborate to reach goals and complete challenges as a community		✔
Emotion Management	Identify and understand one's own emotions	✔	✔
	Recognize and identify emotions in others	✔	✔
	Understand that all emotions are okay and give them information	✔	✔
	Recognize that strong emotions can make it difficult to think clearly and make good decisions	✔	✔
	Recognize strong emotions	✔	✔
	Recognize when their emotions are getting stronger	✔	✔
	Anticipate and plan for situations that cause strong feelings	✔	✔
	Manage strong emotions by using strategies to feel calm	✔	✔
Empathy & Kindness	Recognize kindness and ways to act kindly toward others	✔	✔
	Develop empathy for others	✔	✔
	Take others' perspectives	✔	✔
	Identify how kindness and empathy can help a community	✔	✔
	Act with empathy	✔	✔
	Understand the impact empathy and kindness can have on others	✔	✔

Content	Key Skills	Second Step® Elementary Digital Program	Second Step® Out-of-School Time
Problem-Solving	Manage strong emotions to feel calm before solving problems	✔	
	Say the problem	✔	
	Identify the wants and needs of those involved	✔	
	Think of many solutions	✔	
	Explore the outcomes of the solutions	✔	
	Pick the best solution	✔	

Effective Practices for Implementing Both Programs

We recommend that educators begin using Second Step® programs at the start of the school year as they begin to build relationships with the children in their class or OST group. Each program has a sequence and cadence that aligns with its respective environment. As noted, Second Step Out-of-School Time starts with a foundational unit that's not included in the Second Step Elementary digital program. In addition, the Second Step Elementary digital program dedicates five weeks to each unit, while each unit in the Second Step Out-of-School Time program is designed to take four weeks. Because of these differences, children participating in both programs will receive instruction on the same topic at different times in their classroom and their OST group. And that's okay! Reinforcing and practicing knowledge and skills across settings and over time is valuable and supports student learning. What's most important is that each program is taught in its entirety and at the pace intended.

Educators and leaders in schools and OST organizations are encouraged to collaborate and communicate regularly about program use. Collaboration and communication can help educators and leaders:

- **Stay informed of customization.** Schools and OST settings sometimes use specific approaches, modifications, or integrations to help programs fit their community culture or align with other programs used at their site. It's useful for all educators and leaders to be aware of program adaptations in their community and align these approaches, as appropriate.

- **Share best practices.** Communicating with other educators in schools and OST organizations can help educators learn from each others' experiences.

- **Support children.** Some of the hardest and most important work educators do is learning what motivates (and demotivates) a particular child. Sharing information with colleagues across environments can help educators support each child more effectively.