



SUCCESS STORY

SEL and After-School Music Program Harmonize

Second Step® Out-of-School Time helped Kids' Orchestra add intentional SEL to support the well-being of students and staff.

Leaders at Kids' Orchestra in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were excited to hear about the launch of Second Step Out-of-School Time. They believed that social-emotional learning (SEL) was key to a successful classroom and a natural pairing with music education. Embedding Second Step Out-of-School Time within the program gave students more opportunities to nurture social-emotional skills while studying music, and it benefited the staff, too.

Situation

The mission of Kids' Orchestra is to build a community of creative, confident, and socially engaged students through music education. The organization offers after-school programming at several elementary sites in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

In 2021, Kids' Orchestra was concerned with the growing mental health crisis and wanted to ensure they were fostering a safe and secure environment where kids could thrive. With support from a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, they had already implemented Second Step® Elementary classroom kits but sought an SEL curriculum that fit their after-school model. They also wanted a program that would be easy to integrate with their existing material and schedule and would support the social-emotional needs of both students and educators.



Approach

Kids' Orchestra partnered with Dufrocq School, an elementary site in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, to roll out Second Step Out-of-School Time as part of a two-day-a-week program. Their previous schedule of 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. included a 50-minute music lesson. To implement Second Step Out-of-School Time, they adjusted the end time to 5:15 p.m., and dedicated a 20-minute period to the SEL materials each day.

Site leaders educated staff and stakeholders on the beneficial connection between SEL and music education, as well as the supports, resources, and training provided in the program. Staff were encouraged to share feedback on how to integrate SEL more intentionally and effectively into their schedules.

Students also had the opportunity to voice their feedback and suggested starting with music lessons and ending the day with SEL. This change motivated the kids to work hard during music lessons, kept them engaged, and rewarded them with fun and interactive activities.

Outcomes

The first year of Second Step® Out-of-School Time implementation was a success for Kids' Orchestra. Students learned how to better interact and contribute as community members and became more equipped to manage their emotions.

Staff reported significant improvement in their relationships with students and colleagues. They found the program easy to implement and adapt to their schedules, and thought the material was an organic fit with their existing program.

Staff found it fulfilling to see students have a safe space to socialize, learn, and play. Families also praised the program,

“ As that focus on SEL continued, our staff saw their relationships with students and student-to-student relationships improve, as did the culture of the site. ”

—Sam Trevathan, Education Director
Kids' Orchestra

explaining how effective music education and SEL have been for their children.

Currently, there are plans to roll out Second Step Out-of-School Time in an additional 12 to 15 after-school programs in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

What Are Second Step® Programs?

The Second Step family of social-emotional learning programs includes classroom-based curricula for PreK–Grade 8, with additional offerings for out-of-school time and K–12 educators.

Visit SecondStep.org to explore our research-based programs. To learn about more educators' experiences with Second Step programs, visit secondstep.org/success-stories or call Committee for Children at 800-634-4449, ext. 1.

Who Is Committee for Children?

Though we're best known for our innovative Second Step family of SEL programs, Committee for Children is involved in all kinds of initiatives to improve the lives of children. Founded as a nonprofit in 1979 to help victims of child sexual abuse, we continue to advocate for policies and legislation to protect kids and provide equal opportunities for all. From our headquarters in Seattle, Washington, we partner with researchers, policymakers, and thought leaders around the world to fulfill our vision of safe children thriving in a just and peaceful world.