

Introduction to the Tool Kit

Deciding to Implement and Sustain a Social-Emotional Curriculum

Early childhood professionals have long recognized the importance of emotional competence and social skills as a foundation for learning and for success in life. In the past, the view of the general community was largely that learning to get along with others was nice, and that it was good that early childhood programs gave children the chance to learn and practice social skills. At the same time, there was a belief that these were in a sense “soft skills” and were not as important as what were referred to as the “academic skills” related to reading, writing and math. In recent years, however, the importance of emotional competence and social skills has been clearly demonstrated and documented by research. We now understand that social and emotional well-being is the cornerstone of learning, a crucial factor for success in school and in life.

In the past, development of social skills was usually left up to the classroom teacher and could vary from teacher to teacher, and from year to year within the same program. Many early childhood programs are now considering being more purposeful in their approach to helping children develop emotional competence and social skills. In addition, formal curricula has been developed for this purpose by both commercial enterprises and non-profit organizations.

This tool kit is designed to help early childhood programs think through the decision to adopt a social-emotional curriculum and to give them the tools to implement it.

These tools can also help to sustain a social and emotional curriculum that an early childhood program has worked hard to initiate. It is unfortunate, but true, that early childhood programs experience high staff turnover. Turnover is often accompanied by changes in classroom practices; this can pose a real challenge to the consistent implementation of any curriculum. To address this issue, we can look at the example of health and safety practices in early childhood programs which seem to be quite consistent even when there is staff turnover. Looking at health and safety practices, we find that they:

- are based on requirements in the regulations and had been thought out;
- are seen as very important;
- are usually defined and written in several places – handbooks for parents and staff, parent newsletters;
- are regularly documented on prepared forms;
- are part of the orientation for new staff;
- are often checked on; and
- are often reviewed and discussed at staff meetings.

Together these practices form an infrastructure that support the health and safety practices. leading to the sustaining of those practices. They remain largely the

same even when teachers change. If teachers do not follow them, there are usually measures in place to address the situation. It is understood that when it comes to health and safety, there is a definite set of expectations and required practices.

An early childhood program needs a similar infrastructure for the social-emotional curriculum, and the tools in this tool-kit can help programs create it.

This tool kit contains information on a variety of aspects related to implementing and sustaining a social-emotional curriculum. It also contains sample statements and forms designed so that they can be easily adopted or adapted as needed by busy early childhood program administrators. Not every program or site is likely to need all the components of the tool-kit; rather, administrators should select those components that will help meet the goals and needs of their programs.

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Roles and Responsibilities in Implementing a Curriculum

Decision-Making Entity: Board of Directors, Executive Director, Owner

This body or individual is responsible for making a formal decision to implement a curriculum and to allocate resources necessary to ensure successful, faithful implementation. They direct the administrator to develop the structures to formalize and sustain the implementation. They request and receive periodic reports on the progress and outcomes of implementing the curriculum from the administrator.

Program Administrator

The program administrator is responsible for ensuring the curriculum is implemented and developing the structures to formalize and sustain the implementation. If the administrator is also the supervisor of classroom staff, he or she also performs the duties of the supervisor listed below. The program administrator also reports to the board of directors, executive director, or owner on the progress and outcomes of implementing the curriculum.

Supervisor

Staff who supervise classroom teachers and assistants are responsible for observing the classrooms to ensure that the curriculum lessons and activities are being faithfully implemented. The supervisor is also responsible for giving staff feedback and helping them improve skills on implementing the curriculum.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher in each classroom is responsible for scheduling curriculum lessons, including them in lesson plans, and teaching the lessons or assigning them to assistants. He or she is also responsible for carrying out activities throughout the day as outlined in the curriculum. This person looks for opportunities to incorporate the concepts and activities from the curriculum into relevant situations that occur throughout the day.

Teaching Assistant/Aide

Teaching assistants and aides lead or help children participate in curriculum activities under the direction of the head teacher. They also look for opportunities to incorporate the concepts and activities from the curriculum into relevant situations that occur throughout the day.

Formalizing the Decision to Adopt and Implement a Curriculum

Once the work of developing guiding principles has led to the articulation of an approach and the choice of a curriculum (see page 7 for Developing Guiding Principles), it must be supported by the weight of a formal approval of or adoption by the program's decision-making entity. Without this, implementing the approach and the curriculum might never actually happen or might begin and then falter.

In order to formally adopt and implement any curriculum, the decision-making entity needs to know how and why the curriculum was chosen and it needs to know what resources will be needed to implement it. The information from the guiding principles can be used to explain how and why the curriculum was chosen. The information about resources needed to implement it must be determined based on the actual curriculum. Refer to "Determining Resources Needed to Adopt a Curriculum" below.

Here is a sample statement to formalize the adoption of a curriculum. It includes information about resources needed to implement the curriculum.

_____ Name of curriculum _____ will be adopted as the curriculum we use to promote and develop emotional competence. It will be incorporated into our administrative and program structures to ensure faithful implementation. Resources including _____ list resources _____ will be allocated to implement the curriculum.

Determining Resources Needed to Implement a Curriculum

Here is a guide to determine the resources needed to implement a curriculum.

- Cost of the curriculum – This is usually set by the developer of the curriculum. Most social and emotional curricula comes in the form of classroom kits. Each classroom will need its own kit. This is easily calculated. Note that if the curriculum is developed for preschoolers, kits will only be needed for classrooms serving preschool age children. Infant and toddler classrooms would not be included in the calculation.
- Staff training and orientation – The developer of the curriculum usually has materials, formats and recommendations for staff training and orientation. This may include a combination of face to face training and on-line training. Using the information from the developer, determine the resources needed by figuring the cost of the trainer(s) and any costs for food or additional materials to conduct the training. Another resource will be staff time even though it may not represent a cash outlay. List it in terms of the number of staff who will need to be trained and the length of time for the training. Include staff in classrooms where the curriculum will be implemented and supervisors. It is vital that supervisors are included in the training because they will be responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is being faithfully implemented.
- Developers of some curricula may have very specific requirements and costs for staff training and orientation. They may require that training be conducted only by their trainers; they may limit the number of people who can be trained in a session. They may require the purchase of additional sessions. All of these considerations will almost certainly affect the choice of a curriculum.
- After the initial training, the new curriculum will be incorporated into the program and administrative structures. If programs choose to implement additional supervisory or mentoring processes to support the implementation of the new curriculum, the staff time required should be added to the resource allocation.

Here is a sample statement related to the resources needed:

Resources including _____ \$600 for curriculum kits for two classrooms and one full day for 8 staff for training _____ will be allocated to implement the curriculum.

Developing Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are a set of statements that articulate the beliefs upon which a program is built and operates. For approaches to helping children develop social skills and emotional competence, the guiding principles would include beliefs and decisions about the early childhood program considers important. They reflect thought, discussion and decision. The statements are relatively simple, straightforward and clearly articulate the program's position related to the issue.

It may be tempting to look for a good set of guiding principles that someone else has developed and just adopt them. However, guiding principles are most effective when they are carefully developed by the early childhood program. The process is valuable because it requires people to really identify, think through and articulate a position on issues. Here is a process to facilitate this process:

- Think of the types of issues, values and beliefs that should be considered.
- Choose one to begin with.
- Discuss the various positions or thoughts related to it.
- Decide on a position.
- Draft a statement that presents the position.
- Review the statement and have others review the statement for clarity or questions.
- Discuss the questions or comments and decide whether or not to revise the statement.
- Review again.
- Adopt the statement.

Sample Guiding Principles for Developing Social Skills and Emotional Competence:

1. We recognize that social and emotional well-being is the cornerstone of learning, and we devote time and attention to the well-being of each child. We understand that our relationships with children are crucial to their emotional well-being. We understand that this relationship results from our providing genuine warmth, responsiveness and support to each child.
2. We recognize that at the preschool level specific social skills and emotional competence can also be taught and then practiced in real situations that arise in the classroom.
3. We recognize the importance of intrinsic motivation in the development of social skills and emotional competence and value approaches that promote it.
4. We seek and choose curricula to develop social skills and emotional competence that reflects our values and guiding principles, is consistent with the way young children think and learn and is evidence-based and research-based.
5. We recognize that our approach to developing social skills and emotional competence in young children must be understood, embraced and faithfully implemented by all staff.
6. We recognize parents as children's primary relationship and the main influence on their social and emotional development, and ensure that we present our approach to parents clearly, and look for opportunities to share it with them.
7. We respond to parents' questions, concerns and suggestions related to their children's social skills and emotional competence with understanding and respect even when we decide not to comply with suggestions that are counter to our guiding principles.
8. We recognize that there may be outside pressures to use approaches based on extrinsic motivation such as reward systems or punishment systems. We respond to such pressures with clear explanations and appropriate practices based on our guiding principles.

Sample Statement for Parent Handbook

Note: This statement can also serve as a set of "talking points" to use in conversations with parents and as the basis for newsletter articles.

This statement specifically refers to "Second Step" as the curriculum, but can be revised for other curricula.

We have put a great deal of thought into how we can best help children learn to value themselves and others and learn skills to get along with others. We accomplish this in two ways. One is by having warm relationships with children and always responding to them with respect so they know they can trust us. The other way is by teaching them specific skills using the Second Step program. Second Step is a curriculum that includes lessons to help children learn behavior and social skills and then to practice those skills throughout the day. The Second Step program was developed by experts specifically for young children and has been studied by researchers and found to be very effective.

Second Step helps children develop a sense of doing the right thing "because it's the right thing to do" rather than to get a reward or avoid a punishment. This intrinsic motivation is a key to success in life, and so we value it for your children.

You may be surprised not to see "bad behavior" charts, reward systems or punishment methods in our program. This is not an oversight. We deliberately avoid them because they are based on outside motivation, and our focus is on helping children develop motivation that comes from within themselves. This is the kind of motivation that leads to self discipline which is what we value for your children.

We do our best to inform parents about exactly what their children are learning through Second Step. Second Step includes information and activities for families for each lesson, and we send these sheets home every week. We invite parents to ask questions about Second Step and our approach to helping children value themselves and others and learn skills to get along with others.

Sample Statement for Staff Handbook

Note: This statement refers to Second Step as the social-emotional curriculum, but can be revised for other curricula.

We have put a great deal of thought into creating an approach to help children develop emotional competence and learn social skills. All staff are expected to carry out our approach as designed. Implementation of this approach is included in staff performance assessment.

Our approach is based on developing positive relationships with children and helping them develop the skills to have such relationships with others. We create these relationships by providing genuine warmth, responsiveness and support to each child. We also create an atmosphere of acceptance of and caring for each other within our classrooms.

Our focus is on helping children develop intrinsic motivation to care for each other with acceptance and respect. We don't use "bad behavior" charts, reward systems or punishment systems in our program. This is not an oversight. We deliberately avoid them because they are based on outside motivation, and our focus is on helping children develop motivation that comes from within themselves.

At the preschool level we use the Second Step program to develop emotional competence and teach social skills. Second Step is a curriculum that includes lessons to help children learn behavior and social skills and then to practice those skills throughout the day. The Second Step program was developed by experts specifically for young children and has been studied by researchers and found to be very effective.

We provide orientation and training on the Second Step curriculum to ensure that all staff who work with preschool children have the information they need to successfully implement it. If staff have questions about our approach to develop emotional competence and social skills (including questions about Second Step), they are encouraged to bring them to the program director. Staff may not, however, use practices that are inconsistent with our approach to helping children develop emotional competence and social skills.

Incorporating Second Step/PATHS into Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are the early childhood program's formal documents outlining staff responsibilities. Incorporating Second Step or PATHS into an appropriate item on the job description is a clear indication that there has been an administrative decision to adopt it and an expectation that staff will carry it out. All staff should have a copy of their job descriptions.

Job descriptions can be used in a number of ways:

- Prospective staff may request a job description to review before applying for a position.
- Staff orientation should include a thorough review of the job description.
- Job descriptions can be referenced during routine, on-going supervision and during supervision sessions to address specific performance concerns or issues.
- Performance appraisals should reflect the job description to indicate that what is being expected is also what is being assessed. (See "Incorporating Second Step/PATHS into Performance Appraisals")

Sample Statements for Job Descriptions for Classroom Staff

Here are two sample statements that can be incorporated into existing job descriptions for classroom staff. The first one specifically addresses the program's overall approach to the development of social skills and emotional competence and includes Second Step/PATHS. The second one is more general and includes Second Step/PATHS as one of the curricula chosen by the program. It may be easier to incorporate the second example into an existing job description statement. The first one would more likely be a separate item.

Sample Statement #1:

Employee learns, supports and implements the program's approach to the development of social skills and emotional competence including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level.

Sample Statement #2:

Employee learns, supports and implements curricula chosen by the program including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level.

Sample Statements for Job Descriptions for Supervisors

Here are two sample statements that can be incorporated into existing job descriptions for employees who are responsible for supervising classroom staff. The first one again specifically addresses supervision related to the program's overall approach to the development of social skills and emotional competence and includes Second Step/PATHS. The second one is more general. It may be easier to incorporate the second example into an existing job description statement. The first one would more likely be a separate item.

Sample Statement #1

Employee observes classroom staff to ensure the program's approach to the development of social skills and emotional competence (including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level) is being faithfully implemented. Employee documents observations and uses them to provide feedback to classroom staff and in performance appraisals.

Sample Statement #2

Employee observes classroom staff to ensure faithful implementation of curricula chosen by the program including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level. Employee documents observations and uses them to provide feedback to classroom staff and in performance appraisals.

Incorporating Second Step/PATHS into Performance Appraisals

The performance appraisal is a formal document that specifically names and measures those aspects of an employee's performance that are seen as important. Items on a performance appraisal typically mirror the employee's job description. An item related to Second Step/PATHS is a clear indication that there is a formal policy on the approach to helping children develop social skills and emotional competence and at the preschool level it includes the Second Step/PATHS curriculum.

Below is a fairly simple way to add such an item to an existing performance appraisal along with a common rating scale. These items reflect statements from job descriptions. See "Incorporating Second Step/PATHS into Job Descriptions." As for all items on a performance appraisal, there should be space for comments and documentation.

Sample Statements for Performance Appraisals for Classroom Staff:

Sample #1

Employee understands, supports and implements the program's approach to the development of social skills and emotional competence including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level.

Sample #2

Employee understands, supports and implements curricula chosen by the program including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level.

These could work with several commonly-used rating scales such as:

rarely	sometimes	usually	
Poor	fair	good	excellent

Comments and documentation from observations:

Sample Statements for Performance Appraisals for Administrators/Supervisors:

Sample Statement #1

Employee observes classroom staff to ensure the program's approach to the development of social skills and emotional competence (including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level) is being faithfully implemented. Employee documents observations and uses them to provide feedback to classroom staff and in performance appraisals.

Sample Statement #2

Employee observes classroom staff to ensure faithful implementation of curricula chosen by the program including the Second Step/PATHS curriculum at the preschool level. Employee documents observations and uses them to provide feedback to classroom staff and in performance appraisals.

Again, these could work with several commonly-used rating scales such as:

rarely	sometimes	usually	
Poor	fair	good	excellent

Comments, reviews of observations and documentation:

Orienting Staff to Second Step/PATHS

The faithful implementation of Second Step or PATHS begins with orientation and training for all classroom staff. When all teachers and assistants have a full understanding of the curriculum, they will be able to participate in helping children practice the skills during real life situations that arise in the classroom. This transfer of learning is vital to children's success in developing the social skills and emotional competence promoted by Second Step or PATHS. It cannot be relegated to or by default fall to a designated Second Step/PATHS teacher, and it certainly cannot be compromised by staff who do not understand or use the Second Step or PATHS approach.

The orientation process will depend in part on the program structure. Some programs operate on a traditional school schedule with a date at which children and teachers start the year; other programs operate on a continuous registration schedule with new staff starting throughout the year. Some programs may be able to orient all new staff at the same time; others may need to orient staff individually as they join the program. All programs, however, need a plan to ensure that staff have the training they need to faithfully implement Second Step or PATHS.

Following is an orientation chart that includes suggested orientation activities and spaces for programs to write in the methods, time frames and persons responsible for each activity.

Some activities such as the explanation of the program's commitment to Second Step or PATHS might be done within a larger orientation context. An example would be going over the staff handbook where it would be stated and explained.

Training on the Second Step or PATHS curriculum should be based on the recommendations of and materials provided by the developer of Second Step or PATHS. It is important that new staff learn about Second Step or PATHS first-hand through the instruction materials. While it may be tempting to give new staff a quick overview of Second Step or PATHS and then expect them to "catch on" by observing it in action, this shortchanges both those new staff and the experienced staff they are joining. A thorough training provides them with the depth of understanding that is required to implement Second Step or PATHS faithfully and fully with their colleagues in the classroom. This does require time, a resource often in short supply. However, the results are well worth the investment.

Based on the staff member's position and the program's own policies, procedures and decisions, there may be requirements for specific processes associated with Second Step or PATHS. For example, head teachers may be required to include Second Step or PATHS lessons in their lesson plans, staff may be collecting data on behaviors or documenting children's independent use of Second Step or PATHS strategies. Any such specific requirements should be included in the orientation.

Plan for Staff Orientation to Second Step/PATHS

Orientation Activity	When and How	By whom
Explanation of program's commitment to Second Step/PATHS		
Clarification of role in implementing Second Step/PATHS (Some staff may be presenting lessons; others might not; all staff will be responsible to help children practice Second Step or PATHS skills during situations that arise in the classroom.)		
Training on the Second Step/PATHS curriculum and transfer of learning process		
Program processes as required Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lesson plans • data collection • documentation • _____ • _____ 		

Observing for faithful implementation of Second Step/PATHS

Supervisors are responsible for observing staff and classrooms to ensure that the early childhood program's philosophy, procedures and practices are being implemented as intended. This faithful implementation is vital to the success of Second Step or PATHS; it includes both the presentation of the curriculum and the active facilitation of transfer of learning throughout the day. The only way to determine whether and how well Second Step or PATHS is being implemented is through direct observation and written documentation.

Effective observation and documentation can answer two questions:

1. Is Second Step or PATHS being faithfully implemented?
2. How do we know this?

The answer to the first question is a conclusion based on the documentation in the second question. It is not enough, then, to simply check "yes" next to a set of indicators. Documentation of actual practices, behaviors and interactions is essential. If Second Step or PATHS is not working well, documentation from observations can be helpful in determining specific areas in which implementation is breaking down. This helps supervisors and teachers create a plan to improve those specific practices.

Observations take several forms. Supervisors may do formal observations where they are in classrooms solely to observe. Such observations are typically for a specific length of time, usually at least half an hour long. Supervisors record what they see and hear in the classroom, writing observations that are detailed and objective. These observations become the documentation used to complete checklists and to reach conclusions.

Supervisors may also make observations in the course of classroom visits for other purposes and in seeing children and teachers in the hall, on the playground, etc. This is different from the formal observation format, but the observations made in these settings and during these times are no less valid. Supervisors often see examples of teacher-child interactions in these less formal settings, and such interactions are where the transfer of learning which is so vital to Second Step or PATHS is most likely to occur. Observations gleaned from these settings are written down in the same manner as those from formal observations; they also contribute to the documentation used to complete checklists and to reach conclusions.

It is not necessary to do a separate observation of Second Step/PATHS. Rather, the supervisor should become familiar with the indicators of faithful implementation, look for examples of the indicators, write them down and date them during the course of other observations. Observations for Second Step or PATHS cannot be completed on a "once and done" basis. They need to take place at several different times during the day because some Second Step or PATHS

activities such as curriculum lessons are scheduled for specific time frames; activities in Second Step such as Brain Builders may be incorporated into larger time frames, and there is no way to schedule the interactions that lead to the transfer of learning. Opportunities for these interactions arise during the course of the day, and supervisors need to see and document that teachers notice the opportunities and act on them.

Second Step and PATHS is also a developmental curriculum. As such teacher practices such as presenting lessons would be seen as soon as teachers begin implementing the curriculum. Children's behaviors such as the spontaneous use of Second Step/PATHS techniques will not be seen until the children have had experience with those techniques and feel comfortable and confident using them. Observations of curriculum, then, should be done over many months, and all documenting observations should be dated so progress can be noted.

Here are indicators of faithful implementation of Second Step (can be revised for PATHS as needed):

- Teachers present Second Step lesson(s) using the curriculum cards and materials, and children are actively engaged.
- Teachers use the Second Step techniques at other times throughout the day. Examples: "scripts" (how to pay attention, for example), activities such as Brain Builders, and Second Step songs
- Teachers prompt children to think about Second Step approaches to situations. (ex. "Remind yourself about the steps to calm down.")
- Children spontaneously use or initiate Second Step techniques without being prompted by a teacher (ex. Children say and do the four steps to pay attention before teacher begins reading a book to the group.)
- Teachers acknowledge and comment positively when children spontaneously use some of the Second Step techniques or see children initiate techniques without teacher prompting. (Ex. "You said and did all the steps to pay attention so you'd be able to pay attention to the book I'm getting ready to read. That's exactly the right thing to do!")
- Second Step materials – posters, emotion cards in the room where children can see them. Puppets may also be visible, but some teachers may wish to keep them put away and only used for Second Step lessons.
- Home Links and Family Letters are being sent to families.

Here is the same information in the form of an "Evidence Sheet" for faithful implementation of Second Step (can be revised for PATHS as needed):

- What evidence did you see that teachers present lessons using the Second Step curriculum and materials and that children are engaged?
- What evidence did you see that teachers use the Second Step techniques at other times throughout the day? Examples include "scripts" (how to pay attention, for example), activities such as Brain Builders, and Second Step songs.
- What evidence did you see that teachers prompt children to think about Second Step approaches to situations? (Example: "Remind yourself about the steps to calm down.")
- What evidence did you see that children spontaneously use or initiate Second Step techniques without being prompted by a teacher (ex. Children say and do the four steps to pay attention before teacher begins reading a book to the group.)
- What evidence did you see that teachers acknowledge and comment positively when children spontaneously use some of the Second Step techniques or see children initiate techniques without teacher prompting? (ex. "You said and did all the steps to pay attention so you'd be able to pay attention to the book I'm getting ready to read. That's exactly the right thing to do!")
- What evidence did you see of Second Step materials – posters, emotion cards, etc. – in the classroom where children can see them?
- What evidence did you see that Home Links and Family Letters are being sent to families?

Following is a form that can be used to record documentation of the indicators of faithful implementation of Second Step for each classroom (can be modified for PATHS).

Documentation of Faithful Implementation of Second Step

Indicator	Evidence/Documentation from Observation	date(s) observed
Teachers present lessons using the Second Step curriculum and materials; children are actively engaged		
Teachers use the Second Step techniques at other times throughout the day		
Teachers prompt children to think about Second Step approaches to situations		
Children spontaneously use or initiate Second Step techniques without being prompted by a teacher		
Teachers acknowledge and comment positively when children spontaneously use Second Step techniques or initiate techniques without teacher prompting		
Second Step materials such as posters and emotion cards are in the classroom where children can see them		
Home Links and Family Letters are being sent to families		

Measuring the Effectiveness of Second Step/PATHS Using Teacher Feedback

Opportunities for teachers to reflect and give feedback on their experiences with Second Step or PATHS provides valuable information about how the program is working and how teachers feel about their involvement with the program. This sends a clear message that teacher feedback is important and can serve as the basis for improving the program. For example, if a large number of teachers report that they do not feel confident implementing Second Step or PATHS after the initial training and orientation, the administrator can meet with teachers to figure out how to improve that training and orientation process. Sharing and using the results of teacher feedback increase the likelihood that teachers will feel engaged in the program; as such it increases teacher “buy in” which is crucial to successfully implementing and sustaining to the social and emotional program.

The sample surveys are designed to be used at three specific times:

1. After the initial training and orientation to Second Step or PATHS
2. At the curriculum midpoint when half of the lessons have been completed;
and
3. When all the curriculum lessons have been completed.

These surveys yield both data and comments. The surveys can easily be aggregated to provide reports to a Board of Directors, Executive Director or owner. In addition, comments can be used to initiate discussion at staff meetings.

Sample Initial Teacher Survey

Teacher _____

Date _____

1. At this point, I feel confident in implementing Second Step/PATHS in my classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Follow up questions:

If indication was 1, 2 or 3

What would it take for you to feel more confident?

If response was 4 or 5

What makes you feel confident?

2. What would you have us know about Second Step/PATHS and how you feel it may work in your classroom?

Sample Mid-Point Teacher Survey

Teacher _____

Date _____

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
At this point I feel Second Step/PATHS is working well in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I notice children using Second Step/PATHS techniques on their own at different times during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
I notice children reminding other children who are upset how to use Second Step/PATHS techniques to feel better.	1	2	3	4	5
I think Second Step/PATHS is making a difference in the behavior of the children in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5

Which statement most closely applies to your classroom?

- _____ All of the staff in my classroom notice situations at other times during the day when we could use Second Step/PATHS techniques to help children who are struggling with emotions or behaviors and step in to help children practice those Second Step/PATHS skills.
- _____ Some staff in my classroom notice situations at other times during the day when we could use Second Step/PATHS techniques to help children who are struggling with emotions or behaviors and step in to help children practice those Second Step/PATHS skills.
- _____ None of the staff in my classroom notice situations at other times during the day when we could use Second Step/PATHS techniques to help children who are struggling with emotions or behaviors.

If there is anything you would like us to know about Second Step/PATHS and how it's working in your classroom, please tell us here.

Sample End-Point Teacher Survey

Teacher _____

Date _____

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think Second Step/PATHS has made a difference in the behavior of the children in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more effective and confident when addressing children's challenging behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5
Parents have commented positively on the Second Step/PATHS program. (Perhaps their children told them about activities or used some of the strategies at home or parents used the home-based materials.)	1	2	3	4	5
I see children using some of the Second Step/PATHS activities or strategies on their own.	1	2	3	4	5

What would you like to say about your experience with Second Step/PATHS in your classroom? (Please feel free to write additional comments on the back.) _____

If you think back to when you began the Second Step/PATHS program, were there any children you felt had serious behavior challenges?

___ NO ___ YES If YES, how many children? ___ If YES, go on.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Second Step/PATHS program is having (or has had) a positive effect on the behavior of children I identified as having serious behavior challenges.	1	2	3	4	5

What do you think it was about Second Step/PATHS that helped the children you identified as having serious behavior challenges? _____

If Second Step/PATHS did not benefit those children, what do you think might be the reason? _____

(Please use the back for any additional comments.)

Building Awareness of and Appreciation for Your Social Emotional Curriculum

Sharing information about your social and emotional curriculum builds interest in your work both within your early childhood program and in the larger community. This interest and the work you do to promote your social and emotional program serves as another way to sustain the implementation of your curriculum.

Use information from the guiding principles and the parent handbook statement in this toolkit and information from the developers of the curriculum to create short articles for your newsletter or website. You can also write articles that feature your program and your curriculum for local newspapers. The developers of your curriculum probably have research and data to support the curriculum, and this information can be useful in such an article. These articles show you as an early childhood program that is being pro-active in addressing the important issue of emotional competence and the development of social skills. You can both educate larger audiences about this issue and also showcase your program by describing your experiences and successes with it.

Use parent comments and quotes as testimonials to the benefits of your work with the curriculum. These are powerful statements and a popular way to share your successes. It is quite likely that parents will tell you how their children have used the activities of your curriculum (such as Second Step's belly breathing to calm down) at home or even how their children have taught them to use them! Save these comments, write them down and ask for permission to use them.

Include anecdotes, stories, updates and discussions related to your curriculum in staff meetings on a regular basis. Share the responsibility for this activity among staff involved in implementing the curriculum.

Developing Mentoring Skills

Mentor practices that promote reflective practice in teachers: Recognizing the difference between traditional positive feedback and responses that promote teacher self-reflection.

People who work as coaches and supervisors and mentors are usually very familiar with providing effective feedback to the teachers they are working with. Traditional positive feedback is designed to give teachers a picture of their practices along with evaluative statements. The supervisor or coach actually describes teacher practices and/or child responses and states or helps the teacher recognize and evaluate the effectiveness of the practice. The purpose of such feedback is to improve the quality of teacher practices. As such, it plays an important role in the coaching and supervising process – and of the teacher’s own learning process.

There is another process that is equally important – the process of self-reflection. In this process, the teacher looks at her own thoughts, emotions, motivations and responses to her own actions or the actions of children or parents. This matters because our actions – which translate as teacher practices – come from our beliefs, perspectives and values. The self-reflection process helps teachers to become aware of and identify their own beliefs, perspectives and values by paying attention to their emotions. This self-awareness is often at the heart of opening up oneself to the possibility of changing practices. People who work as coaches and supervisors have most likely had experiences with teachers who are unwilling to change their own practices and perhaps are even resistant to the thought of changing their practices.

In the self-reflection process, the coach, supervisor or mentor helps teachers to think about their own responses, their own feelings, their own values, their own motivations, their own actions by asking them questions designed specifically to do so.

Here is an example of the difference between traditional positive feedback and questions that promote self-reflection.

Below is an anecdote from a teacher in response to a question about how she felt Second Step was working in her classroom.

“The child in my room with anger issues has reacted positively to the puppets and feeling chart. After a ‘rough’ day his mom arrived and saw him so upset. I asked him to look at the (feeling) chart to describe how his mother was feeling. He picked ‘frustrated.’ Right on!”

Below are two responses to the teacher.

Response 1

“Good for you. You were really able to help him recognize and identify his mother’s emotions. That’s an important step for this child. What you’re doing is working. ”

Response 2

“What a great outcome. How did you decide in that moment to ask him to think about and identify his mother’s feelings?”

Consider these questions:

- Which response is more likely to result in the teacher thinking more about her own practice?
- Why did you choose that response?
- What do you notice about that response? How is it different from the other one?

Developing Mentoring Skills

Making the most of videotaping teachers in the classroom

Videotaping teachers in the classroom can provide valuable insight into teacher practices that impact the successful implementation of curriculum.

As mentors and teachers view the videotape together, here are self-reflection questions to help teachers make the most of this experience. This is actually a collection of questions that mentors may wish to choose from based on their experience with the teacher.

Before viewing the video:

- What is it like for you as you prepare to view the video?
- What do you think the video might show?
- What do you expect the video will show?
- What do you expect to learn from viewing the video?
- What do you hope to learn from viewing the video?

After viewing the video:

- What was it like for you viewing the video?
- What did you see about yourself that you didn't see in the moment this was happening in the classroom?
- What did you see about (a specific) child or children that you didn't see in the moment?
- Where did you see yourself being especially effective?
- Where did you see yourself being not as effective as you would have wished?
- Looking back, what do you wish you would have done?
- What might you want to do differently going forward based on what you saw in the video?
- What help might you need to make those changes?