

PEDALS General Tips on Second Step for Teachers



Throughout our many years of experience with PEDALS, we have worked extensively with the Second Step program and developed some useful tips on the Second Step components. We want to share them here with you as you begin your work with PEDALS. Complete information and details are found in the Early Learning Teaching Materials Notebook included with the Second Step curriculum.

Puppet Script and Story and Discussion

You can personalize the scripts by using the names of children in your class and class examples. Because the scripts have been carefully thought out, pay attention to and focus on the vocabulary, content, and objectives of the lesson. These activities are designed to be short, 5-7 minutes for older children, and 3- 5 minutes for younger children.

Puppet Script and Puppets

If you find it difficult to hold the lesson card while you do the puppet script, consider having an assistant or child hold the card, or propping the card up. You can also use a water bottle to “hold” a puppet.

Because the puppets are a part of the classroom, find a home for them in the classroom where they are visible to the children. They can become a part of other classroom activities such as field trips and lunchtime.

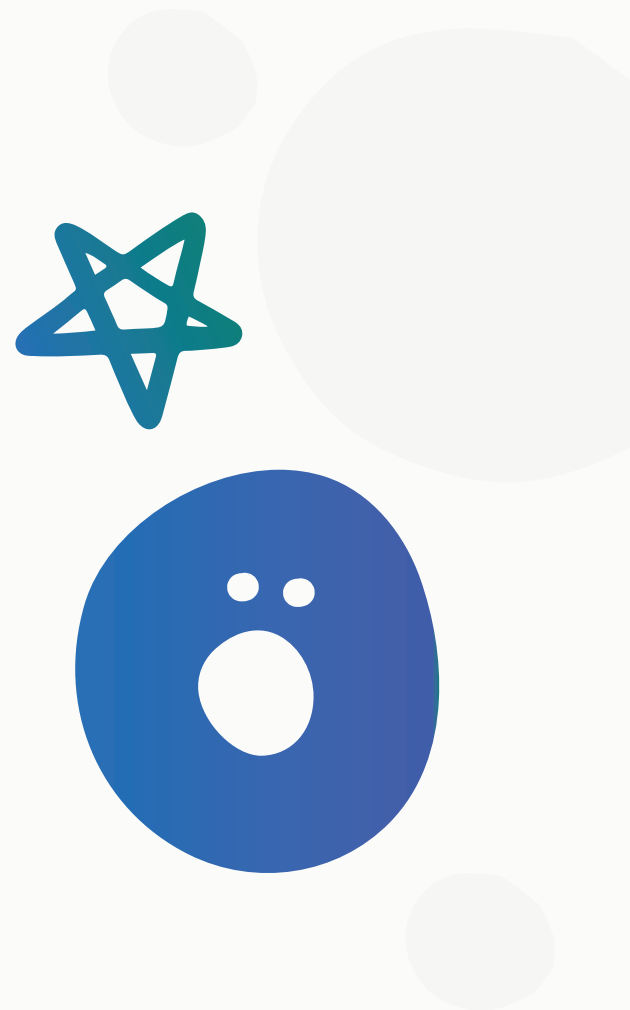
Brain Builders

Brain Builders are short, active, fun games designed to build children’s abilities to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. As such, they are a vital component of the Second Step curriculum.

Brain Builders can be played often and at any time during the day. They can be played with large or small groups of children. Brain Builders are particularly useful for transitions between activities.

Brain Builders help build the parts of children’s brains that support self-regulation. Although they appear to be merely simple games, they help build children’s brains by developing the following executive function skills:

- attention, by focusing attention on the teacher and by listening and watching carefully;
- working memory, by remembering what to do in the game; and
- inhibitory control, by controlling how they move in the game and when they stop and start.



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Practice Opportunities

The best way to help children develop Second Step skills is to observe closely, notice opportunities to practice skills, and take advantage of teachable moments with support and modeling.

We recommend you infuse Second Step throughout the day rather than just at lesson time. This helps the children internalize Second Step skills and strategies and eventually put them into practice on their own.

You can find Second Step language and vocabulary to reinforce throughout the day on each Weekly Theme card.

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Books

Books are an important weekly component of Second Step. The book doesn't have to be on the Second Step booklist to "count" as a Lesson-related book; any book related to the Lesson theme "counts."

You can refer to the PEDALS booklist and work with your Coach if you need ideas on specific social emotional books to use with each lesson.

The Second Step Teaching Materials Notebook provides ways to use social emotional books to reinforce Second Step skills (on page 16 for the blue Second Step kit, page 8 in the green kit).

Curriculum Connections

You can reinforce children's skills by integrating them into other activities in the learning environment. The program's Curriculum Connections gives children a chance to connect Second Step skills and concepts to other curriculum areas such as dramatic play, movement, or science. Curriculum Connections for each Second Step unit are found on the Unit Cards.



WEEKLY PLANNING SUGGESTIONS

We've learned from teaching teams that they've found it valuable to spend some time each week preparing for Second Step using the recommendations below. They've also found that, with experience, they can do this in under 10 minutes.

- Read over Weekly Theme Card
- Practice with the puppets
- Watch videos of the curriculum components on the Second Step website
- Review Unit Card
- Listen to the Second Step CD
- Practice weekly Brain Builder