



The best way to help children develop *Second Step* skills is to observe closely, notice opportunities for children to practice skills, and take advantage of teachable moments with support and coaching. Below are suggestions for times to practice skills.

Unit One Practice Times

For welcoming:

- The first group time of the day
- When a visitor or family member is present
- When a new child joins the group

For listening, focusing attention, using self-talk, and following directions:

- Snack and mealtime conversations
- Group time
- Transitions between activities

For asking for help:

- Snacks and mealtime
- Getting ready to go outside or home
- Trying something new

For paying attention, using memory, and controlling behavior (executive-function skills):

- Learning new songs, finger plays, and rhymes
- Learning simple dances
- Playing group games

Unit Two Practice Times

For identifying one's own feelings:

- Feelings check-ins at group time or mealtime
- When you notice children demonstrating feelings with their faces or behavior, ask: **How are you feeling?**
- Use the [Feelings Poster](#) (PDF) to help children name their feelings

For identifying the feelings of others:

- When announcing a new or different activity
- When another child shows a feeling on his or her face, ask: **How is _____ feeling? How can you tell?**
- Use the [Feelings Poster](#) (PDF) to help them name others' feelings

For demonstrating caring and helping:

- Clean-up or snack time
- When another child is hurt or sad

Unit Three Practice Times

For identifying strong feelings:

- When you notice children demonstrating strong feelings with their faces or behavior, say: **It looks like you are having a strong feeling.** Use the [Feelings Poster](#) (PDF) to help children name their feelings.

For practicing calming down:

- Transitions

- Rest time or snack time
- Coming in from outside or after active play
- Whenever children have strong feelings

For waiting:

- When children line up to do something
- When there is a delay before something happens (for example, before food is served at snack time)
- Games that involve taking turns

Unit Four Practice Times

For playing in fair ways:

- When two or more children play together
- Games that involve taking turns
- When there are fewer tools or toys than the number of children playing

For inviting others to play, or for joining in play:

- Any free playtime when groups of children play together inside or outside

For solving problems:

- When a child doesn't know what to do
- When a conflict arises between children
- When more than one child wants to play with the same thing
- When mean or hurtful behavior has occurred (often a clue to a problem)
- When working with puzzles or other activities that pose a challenge and can make children feel stuck