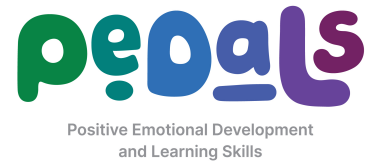


PEDALS Tip Sheet: Using Second Step with younger children



The Second Step Curriculum is designed for 4- and 5-year-old preschoolers. Some PEDALS classrooms, however, have included children who were younger, 2 ½ - 3 years old. This Tip Sheet provides suggestions and modifications from PEDALS teachers and coaches to help meet the developmental needs of these younger children. These tips are appropriate to use with older children as well, but might be particularly helpful for younger children.

Use Second Step Posters as Visual Aids

- For role-playing or modeling different emotions
- For helping children name their feelings
- For practicing the calm down technique
- For practicing ways to play together, how to trade toys, and how to take turns with friends

Curriculum Reinforcement Techniques

- Modify puppet scripts to meet the needs of the children.
- Repeat lessons and activities as needed for younger children to help them grasp the objectives and skills (it's okay to repeat the same lesson for a second week if needed). Because the lessons build on each other, it's important to do them in order and not skip lessons.
- Use smaller groups to reinforce lesson themes and practice skills. Pair older children with younger children for practice opportunities.
- Repeat Second Step songs and listening rules throughout the day.
- Use scenarios the children are familiar within the classroom to role-play positive social emotional skills from Second Step lessons. Develop these scenarios from situations that may occur between children in a variety of classroom experiences such as the gym, the block center, and the dramatic play area. This will enhance the children's awareness and understanding of their own feelings and the feelings of their peers.
- When it comes to Brain Builders, start with the first five, which are the simplest. If the next Brain Builders are too hard, it's okay to continue to go back to the first five Brain Builders so that children can build confidence and competence. Use the Brain Builders throughout the day, such as during circle time, gym time, transition times, and outside.

Reinforce Social Emotional Language

- Use the Second Step Feelings Cards to help children name their feelings.
- Enhance the children's language skills by using the language of Second Step to describe children's actions or feelings. "You were so angry when your tower fell over." "Look at her smile and clap her hands. She's happy with her painting." "She's taking belly breaths so she can calm down." Use Second Step language in responsive conversations with children. If a child appears worried and says that she doesn't like the visiting clown, follow the child's conversation lead. "You don't like that clown. You're worried about him. I'll help you."