

## Second Step Early Learning Program and Head Start Performance Standards

The *Second Step* Early Learning program teaches preschool-aged children core social-emotional and self-regulation skills, including executive-function skills, skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, problem-solving skills, friendship skills, and transitioning to kindergarten. Registered users have access to a dedicated website, [SecondStep.org](http://SecondStep.org), which provides staff-training materials and additional program information and resources, such as Weekly Plan templates, book lists, and video examples of Weekly Theme activities. In addition, all child and family materials are available for download in Spanish at no extra cost.

The program consists of 28 Weekly Themes divided into five units. Each Weekly Theme features short five- to seven-minute activities that incorporate a variety of learning strategies, including:

- Puppet scripts featuring two child puppets included in the kit
- Stories and discussions based on large color photos of typical early childhood scenarios
- Small-group skill-practice activities
- Songs that reinforce program skills and concepts, with CD and lyrics sheets included in the kit
- Brain Builder games that develop the executive-function skills of flexible attention, working memory, and inhibitory control
- Visual aids, including a set of 20 Feelings Cards, three colorful posters, and Listening Rules Cards
- Home Link activities that families can do with their children to reinforce skills

Head Start Program Performance Standards: Subpart C—Education and Child Development Program Services	<i>Second Step: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning</i>
<p><b>1302.30 Purpose</b></p> <p><b>1302.30</b></p> <p>All programs must provide high-quality early education and child development services . . . that promote children’s cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school.</p> <p>All programs must implement a research-based curriculum . . . that supports individualization and growth in the areas of development described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and supports children’s learning and development.</p> <p>A program must deliver developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts.</p>	<p><b>General Description</b></p> <p>The <i>Second Step</i> Early Learning program teaches preschool-aged children core self-regulation and social-emotional skills. It is research-based and aligns strongly with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework in the following domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approaches to Learning</li> <li>• Social and Emotional Development</li> </ul> <p>It is designed for typically developing four-year-olds in culturally diverse classrooms, but can be used successfully in multi-age classrooms with three- and four-year-olds.</p>

## Head Start Program Performance Standard

## Second Step Early Learning Program

### 1302.31 Teaching and the Learning Environment

#### 1302.31 (a)

A program must ensure . . . an organized learning environment that promotes . . . children’s skill growth aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

The program promotes skill development in the following Framework domains

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development

For alignment with the Framework, see the *Second Step* Early Learning Program and Head Start Outcomes Framework chart beginning on page 6.

#### 1302.31 (b) (1) (i)

Teaching practices must emphasize nurturing and responsive practices, interactions, and environments that foster trust and emotional security; are communication and language rich; promote critical thinking and problem-solving; social, emotional, behavioral, and language development; provide supportive feedback for learning; motivate continued effort; and support all children’s engagement in learning experiences and activities.

A core component of the program is that teachers model, notice, reinforce, coach, and cue the self-regulation and social-emotional skills being taught. This helps create an environment that promotes social-emotional development and supports teachers in developing close bonds with children. It emphasizes the importance of teachers’ empathic responses to children. Group discussions and small-group skill-practice activities help build trust and safety, and promote language development.

#### 1302.31 (b) (1) (ii)

Teaching practices must focus on promoting growth in the developmental progressions described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

The program supports teachers in identifying and promoting critical executive-function, self-regulation, and social-emotional skills in a developmentally appropriate way.

#### 1302.31 (b) (1) (iv)

Teaching practices must include developmentally appropriate learning experiences in . . . social and emotional development . . . that are focused toward achieving progress outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

The Weekly Themes provide clear examples of developmentally appropriate learning experiences that promote self-regulation and social-emotional development.

For Weekly Theme alignment with the Framework, see the *Second Step* Early Learning Program and Head Start Outcomes Framework chart.

#### 1302.31 (b) (2) (ii)

For preschool age dual language learners, [a program must] include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language.

The *Second Step* Weekly Theme Cards, songs, Brain Builder games, posters, visual aids, and family materials are available in both English and Spanish.

#### 1302.31 (c)

A program must ensure teachers implement well-organized learning environments with developmentally appropriate . . . lesson plans.

Weekly Theme Cards provide complete scripted plans for short daily activities. They include best-practice pedagogy designed for typically developing four-year-olds, and everything the teacher would need to conduct engaging learning activities.

#### 1302.31 (c) (2)

A program for preschool age children must include teacher-directed . . . activities, active and quiet learning activities . . . and opportunities for small-group and large-group learning activities.

Weekly Theme activities include the following:

- Large-group activities, including puppet scripts, story-based discussions, and skill practice
- Small-group activities focused on skill practice
- Active Brain Builder games
- Songs

#### 1302.31 (e) (2)

Snack and mealtimes must be . . . used as learning opportunities that support teaching staff-child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child’s learning, development, and socialization.

The program recognizes that snacks and mealtimes are opportunities for learning, and includes suggestions for conversations to practice skills during those times.

Head Start Program Performance Standard		Second Step Early Learning Program
1302.31 Teaching and the Learning Environment	<p><b>1302.31 (e) (3)</b></p> <p>A program must approach routines, such as . . . transitions between activities, as opportunities for strengthening development, learning, and skill growth.</p>	<p>The program includes 12 Brain Builder games with identified levels of difficulty for each game. These are designed to be used at any time of day and especially during transitions. These active games develop children’s executive-function skills (flexible attention, working memory, and inhibitory control).</p>
	<p><b>1302.31 (e) (4)</b></p> <p>A program must recognize physical activity as important to learning and integrate intentional movement and physical activity into curricular activities and daily routines in ways that support . . . learning.</p>	
1302.32 Curricula	<p><b>1302.32 (a) (1) (i)</b></p> <p>Programs must implement developmentally appropriate research-based early childhood curricula, including additional curricular enhancements that are based on scientifically valid research and have standardized training procedures and curriculum materials to support implementation.</p>	<p>The entire program is research-based and includes suggestions for activities that connect to other curriculum areas, such as dramatic play, literacy, mathematics, art, and science.</p> <p>As part of the program, a Staff-Training Toolkit is available to registered users at <a href="http://SecondStep.org">SecondStep.org</a>. The resources included in the Toolkit provide a standardized way of training staff. There is a group version and an individual version of the training, and both are available in Spanish.</p> <p>When teachers adhere to all the scripted activities on the Weekly Theme Cards and use the visual aids as recommended, the program can be implemented in a consistent manner.</p> <p>The content on <a href="http://SecondStep.org">SecondStep.org</a> provides information on all aspects of the program, including a wide range of video models of the program in action.</p>
	<p><b>1302.32 (a) (1) (ii)</b></p> <p>[Programs must implement curricula] that are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework . . . and are sufficiently content rich to promote measurable progress toward development and learning outlined in the Framework.</p>	<p>For alignment with the Framework, see the <i>Second Step</i> Early Learning Program and Head Start Outcomes Framework chart.</p> <p>The program includes a variety of engaging learning strategies and a variety of media, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puppets</li> <li>• Photo-based stories</li> <li>• Brain Builder games</li> <li>• Songs</li> <li>• Visual aids</li> </ul>
	<p><b>1302.32 (a) (1) (iii)</b></p> <p>[Programs must implement curricula] that have an organized developmental scope and sequence that includes plans and materials for learning experiences based on developmental progressions and how children learn.</p>	<p>The Scope and Sequence for the program includes lesson concepts and objectives, and identifies behavioral objectives for all skill-practice activities.</p> <p>Weekly Theme Cards, visual aids, and songs provide developmentally appropriate materials to support learning.</p>
	<p><b>1302.32 (a) (2)</b></p> <p>A program must support staff to effectively implement curricula and at a minimum monitor curriculum implementation and fidelity, provide support, feedback, and supervision for continuous improvement of its implementation through the system of training and professional development.</p>	<p>The program provides online implementation support, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff-Training Toolkit</li> <li>• Weekly Plan templates</li> <li>• Implementation Survey</li> <li>• Week-at-a-Glance Sheets</li> </ul>

Head Start Program Performance Standard		Second Step Early Learning Program
1302.34 Parent and Family Engagement	<p><b>1302.34 (a)</b></p> <p>Programs must structure education and child development services to recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators, and to encourage parents to engage in their child's education.</p>	<p>The following family engagement materials are included in the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Links</li> <li>• Family Letters</li> <li>• Free online resources</li> </ul> <p>These materials recognize and support the importance of family engagement in the child's education. All family materials are available in Spanish.</p> <p><i>Second Step</i> Home Links help families and children build literacy skills through story-based conversations. Family Letters include a code to access free online resources, including a list of books that reinforce program concepts.</p>
	<p><b>1302.34 (a) (2)</b></p> <p>Teachers regularly communicate with parents to ensure they are well informed about their child's routines, activities, and behavior.</p>	<p>Each Weekly Theme has a Home Link that provides information to families about what children are learning, and fun activities they can do to practice the skill of the week.</p>
1302.51 Parent Activities	<p><b>1302.51 (a)</b></p> <p>A program must . . . implement family engagement strategies that are designed to foster parental confidence and skills in promoting children's learning and development.</p>	<p>Four Family Letters provide information about the program and tips for developing skills at home, along with a code to access online resources, such as a list of books that reinforce program concepts.</p>
	<p><b>1302.51 (a) (1)</b></p> <p>[A program must offer] activities that support parent-child relationships and child development.</p>	<p>Home Links include fun activities for a family member to do with the child. These activities promote positive interactions that support the parent-child relationship.</p>
1302.71 Transitions to Kindergarten	<p><b>1302.71 (a)</b></p> <p>A program that serves children who will enter kindergarten in the following year must implement transition strategies to support a successful transition to kindergarten.</p>	<p>The Transitioning to Kindergarten Unit helps children prepare for the transition to kindergarten. Tips for supporting the transition are included.</p>
	<p><b>1302.71 (b) (2) (ii)</b></p> <p>[A program must] help parents understand practices they use to effectively provide academic and social support for their children during their transition to kindergarten.</p>	<p>Home Links that accompany the Transitioning to Kindergarten Unit provide information and activities for families that will help them prepare their children for the transition.</p>
	<p><b>1302.71 (d)</b></p> <p>A program must implement strategies and activities in the learning environment that promote successful transitions to kindergarten for enrolled children, and at a minimum, include approaches that familiarize children with the transition to kindergarten and foster confidence about such transition.</p>	<p>The Weekly Themes in the Transitioning to Kindergarten Unit help children review skills they have learned in the program and anticipate how they can use these skills in kindergarten to help them learn, handle unfamiliar situations, and make new friends.</p> <p>Home Links that accompany this unit provide information and activities for families to help them prepare their children for the transition.</p>

Head Start Program Performance Standard		Second Step Early Learning Program
1302.92 Training and Professional Development	<p><b>1302.92 (b) (5)</b></p> <p>A program must establish and implement . . . research-based approaches to professional development for education staff that are focused on effective curriculum implementation.</p>	<p>The Staff-Training Toolkit outlines a step-by-step process for providing on-site professional development.</p> <p>The Staff-Training Toolkit includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An initial three-hour training to introduce the program and practice doing activities</li> <li>• Four Check-In Meeting agendas to review the unit just implemented and prepare for the next, and for teachers to share successes and challenges</li> <li>• A Wrap-Up Meeting agenda to review program implementation and make a plan for next year</li> </ul> <p>The initial three-hour training includes a PowerPoint with scripted narration and directions for a facilitator to deliver in a group setting, as well as a version designed for an individual. Both are available in Spanish.</p>

Head Start Program Performance Standards: Subpart D—Health Program Services		Second Step: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning
1302.45 Child Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being	<p><b>1302.45 (a) (1)</b></p> <p>[A program must] provide supports for effective classroom management and positive learning environments; supportive teaching practices; and strategies for supporting children with challenging behaviors and other social, emotional, and mental health concerns.</p>	<p>The program promotes the self-regulation and social-emotional skills that support children’s ability to manage their own behavior. The program as a whole sets clear expectations for prosocial behavior, and provides posters and visual aids to support classroom management.</p> <p>The following program elements provide particular support for children with challenging behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brain Builder games for development of executive-function skills</li> <li>• Emotion management strategies for managing strong emotions</li> <li>• Skills for learning, including listening, focusing attention, and using self-talk to stay on task</li> </ul>

# Second Step Early Learning Program and Head Start Outcomes Framework

The chart below shows how the *Second Step* Early Learning program supports preschool-aged children in achieving the goals outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

The program addresses multiple indicators in the following domains and sub-domains of the framework, including:

- Domain: Approaches to Learning
  - Sub-Domain: Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation
  - Sub-Domain: Cognitive Self-Regulation (Executive Functioning)
- Domain: Social and Emotional Development
  - Sub-Domain: Relationships with Adults
  - Sub-Domain: Relationships with Other Children
  - Sub-Domain: Emotional Functioning
  - Sub-Domain: Sense of Identity and Belonging



## WEEKLY THEMES

Skills and concepts are taught through short, daily activities that take 5–7 minutes with little to no prep time.

UNIT 1 Skills for Learning	UNIT 2 Empathy	UNIT 3 Emotion Management	UNIT 4 Friendship Skills and Problem Solving	UNIT 5 Transitioning to Kindergarten
1. Welcoming 2. Listening 3. Focusing Attention 4. Self-Talk 5. Following Directions 6. Asking for What You Need or Want	7. Identifying Feelings (happy, sad) 8. More Feelings (surprised, scared) 9. Identifying Anger 10. Same or Different Feelings 11. Accidents 12. Caring and Helping	13. We Feel Feelings in Our Bodies (worried) 14. Strong Feelings (frustrated) 15. Naming Feelings 16. Managing Disappointment 17. Managing Anger 18. Managing Waiting	19. Fair Ways to Play (play together, trade, take turns) 20. Having Fun with Friends 21. Inviting to Play 22. Joining In with Play 23. Saying the Problem 24. Thinking of Solutions 25. Speaking Up Assertively	26. Learning in Kindergarten 27. Riding the Kindergarten Bus 28. Making New Friends in Kindergarten



**Executive-function skills are the foundation for self-regulation and social-emotional competence. Brain Builder games played daily throughout the program focus on developing these skills by teaching children to pay attention, use memory, and control behavior.**

Head Start Goal	Head Start Indicators Supported by the <i>Second Step</i> Program (By 60 Months)	<i>Second Step</i> Program Content	
<b>Domain: Approaches to Learning</b>			
<b>Sub-Domain: Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation</b>	<p><b>Goal P-ATL 1</b></p> <p>Child manages emotions with increasing independence.</p> <p>Note: This goal is the same as P-SE 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses emotions in ways that are appropriate to the situation.</li> </ul>	<p>The Empathy Unit teaches children to identify their feelings.</p> <p><b>Weekly Themes 7–10</b></p> <p>The Emotion Management Unit teaches children to identify and learn ways to manage strong emotions.</p> <p><b>Weekly Themes 13–18</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks for adult assistance when emotions are most intense.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weekly Themes 7, 13, 15</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a range of coping strategies to manage emotions with the support of an adult, such as using words or taking deep breaths.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weekly Themes 13–18</b></p>
	<p><b>Goal P-ATL 2</b></p> <p>Child follows classroom rules and routines with increasing independence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates awareness of classroom rules when asked and is able to follow these rules most of the time.</li> <li>Follows most classroom routines, such as putting away backpack when entering the room or sitting on the rug after outside time.</li> <li>Responds to signals when transitioning from one activity to another.</li> </ul>	<p>The Skills for Learning Unit focuses on building skills that help children follow classroom rules and routines, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening</li> <li>Focusing attention</li> <li>Using self-talk to stay on task</li> <li>Following directions</li> <li>Asking for help</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 2–6</b></p>
	<p><b>Goal P-ATL 4</b></p> <p>Child manages own actions, words, and behavior with increasing independence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates control over actions and words in response to a challenging situation, such as wanting to use the same materials as another child, or frustration over not being able to climb to the top of a structure. May need support from adults.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weekly Themes 11, 13–20</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waits for turn, such as waits in line to wash hands or waits for turn on swings.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weekly Theme 18</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refrains from aggressive behavior toward others.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weekly Themes 9, 17, 23–25</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begins to understand the consequences of behavior, such as hitting leads to an adult giving you quiet time. Can describe the effects their behavior may have on others, such as noticing that another child feels sad when you hit them.</li> </ul>	<p>The Empathy Unit teaches children how to understand others' feelings and the consequences of their own behavior by helping children learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify others' feelings</li> <li>Look for clues on someone else's face and body</li> <li>Take others' perspectives</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 7–12</b></p>

Head Start Goal	Head Start Indicators Supported by the <i>Second Step</i> Program (By 60 Months)	<i>Second Step</i> Program Content
<b>Sub-Domain: Cognitive Self-Regulation (Executive Functioning)</b>	<p><b>Goal P-ATL 5</b> Child demonstrates an increasing ability to control impulses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stops an engaging activity to transition to another less desirable activity with guidance and support.</li> <li>• Delays having desires met, such as agreeing to wait turn to start an activity.</li> <li>• Without adult reminders, waits to communicate information to a group.</li> <li>• Refrains from responding impulsively, such as waiting to be called on during group discussion or requesting materials rather than grabbing them.</li> </ul>	<p>Many elements of the program are designed to develop the self-regulation skills that help children control their impulses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive-function skills through playing Brain Builder games</li> <li>• Skills for learning, such as following Listening Rules, using self-talk, and asking for what they need or want</li> <li>• Calming-down skills to manage strong emotions and wait for their turn</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 2–6, 13–18</b></p>
	<p><b>Goal P-ATL 6</b> Child maintains focus and sustains attention with minimal adult support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains focus on activities for extended periods of time, such as 15 minutes or more.</li> </ul>	<p>The program helps develop children’s ability to focus through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brain Builder games, which are designed to develop executive-function skills (attention, working memory, inhibitory control)</li> <li>• The attent-o-scope, a tool children can use to shut out distractions and help focus their attention</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 2–6</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends to adults during large- and small-group activities with minimal support.</li> </ul>	<p>The Skills for Learning Unit teaches skills for listening, focusing attention, and using self-talk to stay on task. These skills are used and reinforced throughout the program in the teacher-directed activities for both large and small groups.</p> <p><b>Weekly Themes 2–6</b></p>
<p><b>Goal P-ATL 7</b> Child persists in tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes tasks that are challenging or less preferred despite frustration, either by persisting independently or seeking help from an adult or other child.</li> <li>• Returns with focus to an activity or project after having been away from it.</li> </ul>	<p>The Skills for Learning Unit teaches children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use their attent-o-scopes to maintain focus</li> <li>• Use self-talk to stay on task</li> <li>• Seek help when they need it</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 2–5</b></p> <p>The Emotion Management Unit teaches children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize when they feel frustrated</li> <li>• Use the Calming-Down Steps when experiencing strong emotions</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 14–16</b></p>

Head Start Goal	Head Start Indicators Supported by the <i>Second Step</i> Program (By 60 Months)	<i>Second Step</i> Program Content	
Sub-Domain: Cognitive Self-Regulation (Executive Functioning)	<p><b>Goal P-ATL 8</b></p> <p>Child holds information in mind and manipulates it to perform tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurately recounts recent experiences in the correct order and includes relevant details.</li> </ul>	<p>All Weekly Themes include a Story and Discussion activity. Children are encouraged to recount personal experiences that are relevant to the stories discussed.</p> <p>Brain Builder games help develop children’s working memory—the ability to hold, manipulate, and use information to perform tasks.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully follows detailed, multistep directions, sometimes with reminders.</li> </ul>	<p>The program develops children’s ability to remember and follow multistep directions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brain Builder games</li> <li>The use of self-talk to remember directions</li> <li>Skill-practice activities</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Goal P-ATL 9</b></p> <p>Child demonstrates flexibility in thinking and behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tries different strategies to complete work or solve problems, including with other children.</li> <li>Applies different rules in contexts that require different behaviors, such as using indoor voices or feet instead of outdoor voices or feet.</li> <li>Transitions between activities without getting upset.</li> </ul>	<p>Brain Builder games help support children’s flexibility in thinking and behavior.</p> <p>The Friendship Skills and Problem-Solving Unit teaches children how to solve their own problems in safe ways by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking of different solutions</li> <li>Considering fair ways to play with other children</li> <li>Using the Calming-Down Steps when they are upset</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 19–25</b></p>
<b>Domain: Social and Emotional Development</b>			
Sub-Domain: Relationships with Adults	<p><b>Goal P-SE 1</b></p> <p>Child engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interacts readily with trusted adults.</li> <li>Engages in some positive interactions with less familiar adults, such as parent volunteers.</li> <li>Shows affection and preference for adults who interact with them on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<p>The program encourages teachers to develop close bonds with children, and emphasizes the importance of teachers’ empathic responses to children.</p> <p>All Weekly Themes include Home Links to promote discussion between children and adult family members.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks help from adults when needed.</li> </ul>	<b>Weekly Theme 6</b>
	<p><b>Goal P-SE 2</b></p> <p>Child engages in prosocial and cooperative behavior with adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages in prosocial behaviors with adults, such as using respectful language or greetings.</li> <li>Attends to an adult when asked.</li> <li>Follows adult guidelines and expectations for appropriate behavior.</li> <li>Asks or waits for adult permission before doing something when they are unsure.</li> </ul>	<p>The Skills for Learning Unit promotes prosocial and cooperative behavior with adults by teaching children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus their attention on an adult when asked</li> <li>Follow Listening Rules</li> <li>Make respectful requests when they have a need or want</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 2–6</b></p>

Head Start Goal	Head Start Indicators Supported by the <i>Second Step</i> Program (By 60 Months)	<i>Second Step</i> Program Content
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Sub-Domain: Relationships with Other Children</b></p> <p><b>Goal P-SE 3</b> Child engages in and maintains positive interactions and relationships with other children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages in and maintains positive interactions with other children.</li> </ul>	<p>The Empathy Unit promotes positive interactions with other children by helping children learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to others to show they care</li> <li>Say or do something kind for someone else</li> <li>Begin to understand others' perspectives</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 7–12</b> The Friendship Skills and Problem-Solving Unit teaches children how to make and keep friends.</p> <p><b>Weekly Themes 19–25</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a variety of skills for entering social situations with other children, such as suggesting something to do together, joining an existing activity, or sharing a toy.</li> </ul>	<p>The Friendship Skills and Problem-Solving Unit teaches skills to help children enter social situations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair Ways to Play</li> <li>How to invite others to play</li> <li>How to join in with play</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 19–25, 28</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes turns in conversations and interactions with other children.</li> </ul>	<p>All Weekly Themes include large- and small-group activities that provide opportunities for children to have conversations and interact with each other.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops friendships with one or two preferred other children.</li> </ul>	<p>The Friendship Skills and Problem-Solving Unit teaches children specific friendship skills, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair Ways to Play</li> <li>How to invite others to play</li> <li>How to join in with play</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 19–22</b></p>
	<p><b>Goal P-SE 4</b> Child engages in cooperative play with other children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages in joint play, such as using coordinated goals, planning, roles, and games with rules, with at least one other child at a time.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates willingness to include others' ideas during interactions and play.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Weekly Themes 19–22</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages in reflection and conversation about past play experiences.</li> </ul>		<p>All Weekly Themes prompt children to reflect on concepts learned in the program. Children are encouraged to share their experiences during large- and small-group activities.</p>

Head Start Goal	Head Start Indicators Supported by the <i>Second Step</i> Program (By 60 Months)	<i>Second Step</i> Program Content	
Sub-Domain: Relationships with Other Children	<p><b>Goal P-SE 5</b></p> <p>Child uses basic problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes and describes basic social problems in books or pictures, such as both children wanting the same toy, and during interactions with other children, such as “Why do you think your friend might be sad?”</li> </ul>	<p>Feelings Cards help children practice identifying others’ feelings.</p> <p>Each Weekly Theme features a story based on a photo. The stories depict common problems young children may encounter during their school day. These are used to explore concepts like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair Ways to Play</li> <li>Using words to describe social problems</li> </ul> <p>The Empathy Unit teaches children to identify and understand others’ feelings by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking for physical and situational clues</li> <li>Understanding that other people can have different feelings about the same thing</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 7–12</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses basic strategies for dealing with common conflicts, such as sharing, taking turns, and compromising.</li> </ul>	<p>The Friendship Skills and Problem-Solving Unit teaches children how to deal with conflicts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using one of the Fair Ways to Play (playing together, trading, and taking turns)</li> <li>Using problem-solving steps</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 19–25</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses feelings, needs, and opinions in conflict situations.</li> </ul>	<p>The Friendship Skills and Problem-Solving Unit teaches children how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe problems in conflict situations</li> <li>Speak up assertively</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 23–25</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks adult help when needed to resolve conflicts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weekly Themes 15, 17</b></p>	
Sub-Domain: Emotional Functioning	<p><b>Goal P-SE 6</b></p> <p>Child expresses a broad range of emotions and recognizes these emotions in self and others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes and labels basic emotions in books or photographs.</li> </ul>	<p>Feelings Cards help children recognize basic emotions.</p> <p>Each Weekly Theme features a story based on a photo. Children practice recognizing and labeling emotions using these photos.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses words to describe own feelings.</li> </ul>	<p>The Emotion Management Unit teaches children to describe how they are feeling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning feelings words</li> <li>Recognizing how they feel feelings in their bodies</li> <li>Describing feelings as comfortable or uncomfortable</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly Themes 13–18</b></p>	

Head Start Goal		Head Start Indicators Supported by the <i>Second Step</i> Program (By 60 Months)	<i>Second Step</i> Program Content
Sub-Domain: Emotional Functioning	<b>Goal P-SE 6</b> (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses words to describe the feelings of adults or other children.</li> </ul>	<p>Feelings Cards help children practice identifying others' feelings.</p> <p>Each Weekly Theme features a story based on a photo. Children practice recognizing and labeling emotions using these photos.</p>
	<b>Goal P-SE 7</b> Child expresses care and concern toward others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes empathetic statements to adults or other children.</li> <li>Offers support to adults or other children who are distressed.</li> </ul>	<b>Weekly Themes 1, 12, 21</b>
	<b>Goal P-SE 8</b> Child manages emotions with increasing independence. Note: This goal is the same as P-ATL 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses feelings in ways that are appropriate to the situation.</li> </ul>	<p>The Empathy Unit teaches children how to identify their own feelings.</p> <p><b>Weekly Themes 7–10</b></p> <p>The Emotion Management Unit teaches children to identify and learn ways to manage strong emotions.</p> <p><b>Weekly Themes 13–18</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks for adult assistance when feelings are most intense.</li> </ul>	<b>Weekly Themes 7, 13, 15</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a range of coping strategies to manage emotions with the support of an adult, such as using words or taking a deep breath.</li> </ul>	<b>Weekly Themes 14–18</b>
Sub-Domain: Sense of Identity and Belonging	<b>Goal P-SE 9</b> Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes self using several different characteristics.</li> <li>Demonstrates knowledge of uniqueness of self, such as talents, interests, preferences, or culture.</li> </ul>	The program fosters participation in group discussions with encouragement to express thoughts and feelings.
	<b>Goal P-SE 10</b> Child expresses confidence in own skills and positive feelings about self.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses own ideas or beliefs in group contexts or in interactions with others.</li> </ul>	All Weekly Themes include large- and small-group activities that provide opportunities for children to express their own ideas.

## Second Step: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning

The research-based *Second Step* program helps preschoolers develop lasting executive-function and self-regulation skills by teaching them how to focus attention and manage emotions. Fun Weekly Themes, Brain Builders, puppets, and songs allow youngsters to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Head Start programs are well supported by *Second Step* materials that include family communications, all-staff training, planning and assessment tools, and many components available in Spanish. In multi-age classrooms, the program allows four-year-olds to take the lead and help younger learners excel.



### Contact Us:

800-634-4449  
clientsupport@cfchildren.org

### Learn More:

[cfchildren.org/early-childhood](http://cfchildren.org/early-childhood)

