

**ENABLE – European Network Against Bullying in Learning and Leisure Environments
INFORMATION SHEET ON ANTI-BULLYING APPROACHES**

SECOND STEP

Provides instruction in social and emotional learning with units on skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship skills, and problem solving. The programme designed to reduce impulsive and aggressive behaviour in children and adolescents by increasing their social competency skills. The programme helps schools teach communication, coping, and decision-making skills that help adolescents navigate around peer pressure, substance abuse, and bullying.

1. INITIATING ORGANIZATION(S), PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Developed in the by the Committee for Children, Seattle, WA, USA. German and Norwegian versions have been adapted.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

Builds on cognitive behavioural intervention models integrated with social learning theory, empathy research, and social information-processing theories. Also connects new skills to other areas in the curriculum (e.g., literacy, arts, dramatic arts) and provides a structure for each day of the week.

3. PROGRAMME DURATION

Sets of lessons implemented **over 22 to 28 weeks** each year.

4. COMPONENTS AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Second Step uses four key strategies to reinforce skill development: **brain builder games** (to build executive function), **weekly theme activities**, **reinforcing activities**, and **home links**. Teachers are encouraged to give children daily opportunities to practice. A “Home Link” activity gives students an opportunity to practice new skills with their care-givers. The engaging materials, such as video vignettes and take-home materials, encourage discussion, thought, and open communication between teachers and families.

The sixth-grade curriculum includes content related to bullying, problem-solving skills, emotion management, and empathy. Lessons are highly interactive, incorporating small-group discussions and activities, dyadic exercises, whole-class instruction, and individual work. Lessons are structured and supported through an accompanying DVD that contains rich media content including topic-focused interviews with students and video demonstrations of skills.

5. PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

Pre-kindergarten up to eighth grade.

6. ASSESSMENT

Evaluated in two randomized and two quasi-experimental studies. Students were followed over up to two years. Studies report increased positive social behaviour, reduced conduct problems, reduced emotional distress, improved social and emotional skill performance.

Espelage et al. (2013) presents first-year results from a 3-year school-randomized controlled trial of a middle school social-emotional learning programme (Second Step: Student Success Through

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Prevention; SS-SSTP) in 36 Midwestern schools among 3,616 middle school sixth-grade students. The longitudinal study randomly assigned 18 matched pairs of 36 middle schools to the SS-SSTP or control condition. The seven outcome measures identified in the protocol and evaluated included verbal/relational bullying perpetration, peer victimization, physical aggression, homophobic name calling (victimization and perpetration), and sexual violence (victimization and perpetration).

Students in intervention schools **were 42% less likely to self-report physical aggression** than students in control schools. No significant intervention effects were shown for verbal/relational bully perpetration, peer victimization, homophobic teasing, and sexual violence. Results suggest that SS-SSTP holds promise as an efficacious prevention program to reduce physical aggression in adolescent youth.

7. FURTHER READING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Second Steps studies:

Espelage, D. L., Low, S., Polanin, J. R., & Brown, E. C. (2013). The impact of a middle school program to reduce aggression, victimization, and sexual violence. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 53*(2), 180-186.

Frey, K. S., Nolen, S. B., Edstrom, L. V. S., & Hirschstein, M. K. (2005). Effects of a school-based social-emotional competence program: Linking children's goals, attributions, and behavior. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 26*, 171-200.

Grossman, D. C., Neckerman, H. J., Koepsell, T. D., Liu, P., Asher, K. N., Beland, K., . . . Rivara, F.P. (1997). Effectiveness of a violence prevention curriculum among children in elementary school: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA, 277*, 1605-1611.

Holsen, I., Smith, B. H., & Frey, K. S. (2008). Outcomes of the social competence program Second Step in Norwegian Elementary Schools. *School Psychology International, 29*, 71-88.

Holsen, I., Iversen, A. C., & Smith, B. H. (2009). Universal social competence promotion programme in school: Does it work for children with low socio-economic background? *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion, 2*, 51-60.

Schick, A., & Cierpka, M. (2005). Faustlos: Evaluation of a curriculum to prevent violence in elementary schools. *Applied and Preventive Psychology, 11*, 157-165.

For further information:

<http://www.secondstep.org/>

<http://www.cfchildren.org>