

Penrith Public School is now a Second-Step School!

The *Second Step* Program Promotes

- School success
- School connectedness
- Safe and respectful school climate

By directly teaching students the skills that strengthen their ability to:

- Learn
- Manage emotions
- Have empathy
- Solve problems

Skills for Learning

- Students who can self-regulate are better able to participate in and benefit from classroom instruction.^{1,2}
- The program promotes development of students' self-regulation skills. It provides practice through games for Kindergarten–Grade 3 and through instruction in skills for learning across all grades.
- Skills for learning are necessary for having empathy, managing emotions, and solving problems. The skills for learning are woven into all units.

Empathy

- Being able to feel or understand what another person is feeling prepares students to manage their own strong emotions and solve interpersonal problems with others.³⁻⁷
- The program teaches students skills for identifying emotions in themselves and others, labeling these emotions, and taking the perspectives of others.
- These skills are the basis for helpful and socially responsible behavior. Having empathy is also related to academic success.^{1,4,7}

Emotion Management

- Students who can recognize strong emotions and calm down cope better and are less prone to aggressive behaviors.^{8,9}
- The program teaches students proactive strategies that help prevent strong emotions from escalating into negative behaviors.
- Calm students are better able to use other skills, such as problem solving, to help them get along better with others and make good choices.

Problem Solving

- Students who can solve interpersonal conflicts with peers are less likely to engage in impulsive or aggressive behaviors.¹⁰⁻¹³
- The program teaches students to use four Problem-Solving Steps after calming down.
- Creating a neutral problem statement, generating safe and respectful solutions, and evaluating the consequences of these solutions steers students toward selecting prosocial solutions.

The *Second Step* Program Prevents

- Problem behaviors
- Antisocial behavior
- Peer rejection
- Low academic achievement
- Impulsivity

By developing students':

- Self-regulation skills
- Social-emotional competencies
- School connectedness

This term, our schoolwide theme is skills for learning: listening, focusing attention, using self-talk to stay on-task, and being assertive when asking for help with a learning task.

Why Skills for Learning Matter

To be successful in school, students must be able to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. The skills required to do this are known as “self-regulation skills.” The *Second Step* program promotes development of self-regulation by teaching skills for learning, such as focusing attention, listening, being assertive, and using self-talk.

Students with more ability to self-regulate are more likely to:

- Have better math, literacy, and vocabulary skills
- Have higher academic achievement
- Graduate from high school
- Choose prosocial responses

Students with less ability to self-regulate are at greater risk for:

- Low academic achievement
- Emotional and behavioral problems
- Peer rejection
- Dropping out of school
- Expulsion from school



Additional Key Concepts

- Listening and focusing attention involve using your ears, eyes, and brain.
- Focusing attention and listening help you be a better learner.
- Being assertive is a respectful way to get what you want or need. It's the best way to ask for help.
- Your brain gets smarter every time it works hard.
- The more you practice a skill, the better you get at it.

Additional Key Words

Rules, focusing, focused, distract, distracted, distraction, concentrate, on task, repeat, directions, respect, respectful, respected, disrespected, calm, firm, passive, aggressive

Listening

At our school, we all work hard to be the best learners we can be. One skill for learning is to listen with attention. When we listen with attention, our eyes are watching the speaker, our ears are listening, our voices are quiet, and we're still.

Focusing Attention

Learning happens every day at our school. An important skill for learning is focusing attention. When we focus our attention we use our ears, our eyes, and our brain!

Using Self-Talk

An important skill for learning is using self-talk. Self-talk means talking to ourselves in a quiet voice or in our heads. Self-talk can help us stay on task and focus attention.

Being Assertive

Learning means doing something new every day. Sometimes when we're doing something new, we get stuck and don't know what to do. If we get stuck, we can use a skill for learning—being assertive—to ask for help. Being assertive means asking for what you need or want in a calm, firm, respectful way.