



Program Update

Safe Schools Healthy Students

This publication was produced by the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Office. Delinda Knox, Editor.

Distribution Date:
March 2005

DISD Teachers Focus on YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION



Second Step® A Violence Prevention Program teaches children how to deal with emotions, resist impulsive behavior, resolve conflict, solve problems, and understand the consequences of their actions. The foundation of the *Second Step®* curriculum rests on three essential social competencies: empathy, impulse control and problem solving, and anger management. The program consists of a lesson kit and poster-size photo-lesson cards that depict real children

I have a student who is sweet, but has a low self-esteem due to some learning problems. He had his spirits lifted when the recess teacher gave him a "Magic Triad" ticket for the way he handled a situation outdoors. It has really made an impact on how he is perceived by his peers. The *Second Step®* lessons helped him to know how to handle the situation where it turned out positively for him.

— Patty Dixon
WI 2nd Grade

expressing emotions in real-life situations. Some examples of emotions that are focused upon include anger, surprise, excitement, empathy, frustration, disappointment, and happiness. As the teacher, I use the photo-lesson card and lesson outline to help students connect their past emotional experiences with those they are seeing in the pictures. Through use of puppets (Impulsive Puppy, Be-Calm Bunny, and Slow-Down Snail) the children are drawn into discussion of what is happening in each lesson photo. Each lesson includes role-plays or other activities that reinforce the targeted skill that is being taught that particular week. These lessons take about 30 minutes to teach and I teach 3 lessons per week.

The *Second Step®* professional training

experience has strengthened my knowledge of how to help my students understand and identify their own emotions. Consequently, through this understanding, my students are better able to deal with their emotions in socially acceptable ways. Through use of *Second Step®* Family Guide's weekly take home letters, I am able to keep parents and caregivers abreast of the social competencies that we are working on each week.

Implementing the *Second Step®* Program has impacted my students' learning in a variety of ways. First, by identifying their feelings, my students learn to understand issues that lead to conflicts and then use the problem-solving strategies to resolve or avoid conflicts. By modeling, practice and reinforcement, my students experience growth in self confidence and are better ready for academic learning. Students are able to recognize and understand their feelings, make positive effective choices, and keep their anger from escalating into violence. For example, a student told me that he and his brother got into an argument and that he felt "a lot of anger in his body." He related how he put his hand on his tummy and took deep breaths in order to calm down. This is a calming exercise that students were taught early in the lesson cycle. The program has also had a positive effect on the climate of our classroom. After a lesson on accidents, which focused on how people often misinterpret the actions of others, I noticed my students stopping after an accidental hap-

pening in the classroom or on the playground and saying, "I'm sorry. It was an accident. Are you okay?" This quote was taught in a lesson as an example of what students should say to others in order to avoid confrontations due to misinterpretation. Because students are practicing acceptable ways of dealing with their emotions, there are fewer disruptions and behavior issues which interrupt instruction time and student learning. Consequently, my students feel better about themselves and are more successful academically.

— Lisa Whitley
NWH Kindergarten

The problem-solving skills taught in Unit 3 have been extremely helpful with some of the boys in my classroom. For example, George (*not real name*) had a hard time learning how to share things with his classmates. He would either get mad when I told him to share or get in trouble if he did not share things like crayons, play dough, and block center pieces. Well, one day after a lesson, I feel like George caught on to this thing of sharing and how it makes you feel good when you do share things with your friends. He began to say things like, "Hey teacher, I'm sharing my play dough utensils." It made him feel really good and happy. This is just one little example of the *Second Step®* success stories.

— Cary Ammons
REL Pre-K

For more information about the *Second Step®* program, call Charlene Tucker in the Safe Schools Office at 580-920-4930.

SS/HS Launches New Website

The Safe Schools/ Healthy Students Office is excited to announce that we have launched our newly designed website for everyone to use as a resource and referral site. We encourage you to take time and log on at durantisd.org/safeschools and learn more about each of our services and programs we offer the families within the district. There are links to numerous helpful sites for teachers, parents and students. Take time and check it out today!

Upcoming Issues/Updates:

- **Are our students making the right choices?** A look at the *LifeSkills™* program.
- **You've been served!** We will give you an overview of the Truancy Court successes for the 2004-2005 school year and what to expect next year from the program.