

Dear Family,

We want your child to be successful in school, and that means going beyond the basics. Excelling in academic classes is important, but students also need to know how to learn, make good decisions, handle strong emotions, and get along with others.

This week, we'll begin the ***Second Step*** Middle School Program, which focuses on skills and concepts that are designed to help students both in and out of school.

These include:

- **Mindsets and Goals:** Students learn about ways to grow their brains and get smarter, along with research-based strategies for achieving goals and handling difficult situations.
- **Values and Friendships:** Students learn to identify their personal values and use those values to make good decisions and build strong, positive relationships.
- **Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions:** Students learn the positive role emotions play in their lives, how to handle unhelpful thoughts and strong emotions, and specific strategies for calming down.
- **Serious Peer Conflicts:** Students learn how to identify and avoid serious conflicts, resolve conflicts that can't be avoided, think about other people's perspectives, and help stop bullying and harassment at school.

If you have any questions about the ***Second Step*** Middle School Program, please do not hesitate to contact me for more information. Thank you for supporting your child in learning the skills and concepts that lead to success in school and in life.

## Grade 7, Lesson 1

### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson will help your child understand some of the changes that happen during adolescence, and how the Second Step Program can help your child succeed and do well, both as a student and as a friend.

### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about any changes he or she has noticed in friends now that they're growing up, and what your child thinks about these changes.

## Grade 7, Lesson 2A

### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson teaches students that it's okay to feel nervous about starting middle school. This lesson talks about common fears students have, lets them know their concerns are normal, and helps them feel like they belong.

### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about the adults he or she has met at school. Tell your child about an adult who helped you when you were your child's age.

## Grade 7, Lesson 2B

### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will think of ways he or she can help new students feel welcome at school.

### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child to think of a group he or she enjoys being a part of, and what he or she would do to help a new person in the group feel welcome. Tell your child about a time you helped someone new to your community.

## Grade 7, Lesson 3

### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson explains that learning from mistakes can be useful and helps students understand how to grow from making mistakes.

### Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a mistake you made in the past and what you learned from it. Ask your child to tell you about a mistake he or she made and what he or she learned from it.

## Grade 7, Lesson 4

### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson encourages students to embrace challenges by demonstrating that mistakes are opportunities to learn.

### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child if there's something new he or she would like to try, even if it's challenging. Share with your child something new that you would like to try.

## Grade 7, Lesson 5

### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson is about how people's personalities change as they grow up. Personalities come from the brain, and as brains change and develop, personalities can also change.

### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child to describe his or her personality. Describe for your child how you've seen his or her personality change, and the good things you see in it now.

## Grade 7, Lesson 6

### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn an effective strategy for achieving goals. He or she will practice breaking big goals down into small, simple steps and creating plans for how to take each step.

### Family Lesson Question

Think of a time you achieved a big goal, such as learning to drive or graduating from school. Tell your child about your goal and how you achieved it, and ask your child to tell you about a goal he or she has.

## Grade 7, Lesson 7

### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn how to use If-Then Plans for making positive choices in difficult situations. Research shows this is a great way for students to prepare for difficult situations before they happen.

### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child what an If-Then Plan is. Work together to make a plan for how your child can respond positively to a difficult situation he or she might encounter at home.

## Grade 7, Lesson 8

### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will think about his or her personal values and how he or she can use those values to help make good decisions.

### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about some of his or her values. Talk about how his or her values are similar to or different from yours.

## Grade 7, Lesson 9

### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn about how thinking about his or her values can help make his or her online social world a place where everyone feels safe and welcome.

### Family Lesson Question

Talk to your child about the kinds of interactions he or she has online. Ask your child how he or she shows his or her personal values while interacting online.

## Grade 7, Lesson 10

### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will explore how values can help build strong friendships. Your child will think about how his or her personal values help make him or her a good friend.

### Family Lesson Question

Talk with your child about what he or she likes about his or her friends. Ask your child what he or she thinks those friends like about him or her.

## Grade 7, Lesson 11

### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn about what makes a friendship strong and think of good ways to develop friendships. This will help your child deepen and strengthen positive relationships with his or her peers.

### Family Lesson Question

Talk to your child about friendships. Discuss the fact that friendships sometimes grow stronger and sometimes grow weaker. Ask your child what he or she can do to make a friendship stronger.

## Grade 7, Lesson 12

### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses a fun and engaging activity to practice skills for strengthening friendships. Practicing the skills he or she learned will help your child use them in real life.

### Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a time you had a problem with a friend. Explain how you fixed the problem. Ask your child if there's a strategy he or she has used to strengthen a friendship in the past.

### Grade 7, Lesson 12

#### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses a fun and engaging activity to practice skills for strengthening friendships. Practicing the skills he or she learned will help your child use them in real life.

#### Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a time you had a problem with a friend. Explain how you fixed the problem. Ask your child if there's a strategy he or she has used to strengthen a friendship in the past.

### Grade 7, Lesson 14

#### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will continue to learn about emotions and explore how remembering values can help him or her make good decisions when experiencing strong emotions, like being angry or upset.

#### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child what it feels like to experience a strong emotion. Talk about how it's still possible to make good decisions even when feeling angry or upset.

### Grade 7, Lesson 15

#### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will explore how thoughts affect decision making and how to recognize and handle the unhelpful thoughts that may lead your child to make bad decisions.

#### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about a time he or she remembers having a negative thought that wouldn't go away. Decide together what kinds of actions your child would like to take the next time he or she has an unhelpful thought.

### Grade 7, Lesson 16

#### Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn about skills for calming down. Knowing effective calming-down strategies and how to use them can help your child make good decisions when he or she is upset.

#### Family Lesson Question

Talk to your child about the strategies you use to calm down when you feel upset or angry. Ask your child what he or she can do to calm down in difficult situations.

#### Grade 7, Lesson 17

##### Family Lesson Summary

Research shows that taking slow, deep breaths is an effective way to calm down. This week, your child will practice using slow breathing when he or she is feeling frustrated.

##### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about situations that might make him or her feel frustrated, either at school or at home. Discuss using slow breathing to calm down and come up with a plan your child can follow in frustrating situations.

#### Grade 7, Lesson 18

##### Family Lesson Summary

In this lesson, your child will explore how jumping to conclusions can lead to conflicts. He or she will practice looking at situations from multiple perspectives as a way to avoid conflicts.

##### Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a time you jumped to conclusions about what someone else was thinking, but it turned out you were wrong. Ask your child if this has ever happened to him or her and how he or she felt about learning someone else's perspective.

#### Grade 7, Lesson 19

##### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses an engaging activity to practice exploring the possible issues that come from jumping to conclusions. Practicing the skills he or she has learned will help your child use them in real life.

##### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about some of the problems that jumping to conclusions can cause and talk together about how to handle those problems.

#### Grade 7, Lesson 20

##### Family Lesson Summary

Serious conflicts between students can make them feel unsafe and distract them from their schoolwork. This lesson is the first of 5 on this topic. In this lesson, your child will identify ways to avoid getting into serious conflicts.

#### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child what kinds of conflicts can happen between students at school. Talk about the consequences of those conflicts, and ask your child how he or she avoids getting involved in them.

### Grade 7, Lesson 21

#### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses an engaging activity to practice recognizing and avoiding serious conflicts. Practicing the skills he or she has learned will help your child use them in real life.

#### Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a time you were able to avoid a serious conflict. Explain what you did and how you did it. Ask your child what he or she would do in that same situation.

### Grade 7, Lesson 22

#### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson teaches students to recognize roadblocks—common issues that get in the way of resolving serious conflicts. Students will work together to come up with ways to overcome these roadblocks so they will be ready to resolve any serious conflicts they get involved in.

#### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child how roadblocks can make resolving conflicts difficult. Ask him or her what some common roadblocks are. Together, come up with a plan to overcome one of these roadblocks.

### Grade 7, Lesson 23

#### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses an engaging activity to practice resolving serious conflicts and overcoming roadblocks. Practicing the skills he or she has learned will help your child use them in real life.

#### Family Lesson Question

Sometimes serious conflicts last a long time, and sometimes children need help resolving them. Talk about what your child should do if he or she is ever involved in a serious conflict. Together, make a list of people your child can turn to for help with resolving serious conflicts.

### Grade 7, Lesson 24

#### Family Lesson Summary

In this week's lesson, your child will explore what it means to take responsibility for something and will identify reasons to take responsibility for his or her decisions.

#### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child what it means to take responsibility for your actions, both good and bad. Tell your child about a time you took responsibility for something you did, and ask if your child has ever been in a similar situation.

#### Grade 7, Lesson 25

##### Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson is about gender harassment, which is when boys or girls are bothered, teased, or bullied because they act differently from most boys or girls, or because they may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Gender harassment is a serious issue and can cause serious harm to students.

##### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child what he or she thinks school would be like if there were no harassment.

#### Grade 7, Lesson 26

##### Family Lesson Summary

In this final lesson, your child will review the skills and concepts taught in the Second Step Program. He or she will think about how the skills and concepts have helped in the past and discuss how they may be useful in the future.

##### Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about the skills and concepts he or she is taking away from the Second Step Program. Talk with your child about his or her future plans, and discuss ways he or she can apply Second Step skills and concepts to be successful.

## CHECK OUT PARENTEENCONNECT.ORG

ParentTeenConnect.org, a free website for parents and their teens created by the makers of the Second Step Program, is a great resource for middle school families. It provides expert advice and practical tools for dealing with real parent-teen issues.

## GET TALKING WITH PARENTEEN CONNECT

At ParentTeenConnect.org, you can hear from real parents and teens about the issues that cause conflict in their lives—including screen time, independence, responsibility, and communication—and get expert advice. Visit ParentTeenConnect.org at home with your child, select a topic together, and get talking!