

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 6, Lesson 1

Family Lesson Summary

In this week's lesson, students will learn how their brains are changing and how the Second Step Program can help them grow their brains and learn to be successful.

Family Lesson Question

This week, ask your child what he or she is looking forward to learning this year in school. Describe something you enjoyed learning when you were in sixth grade.

Grade 6, 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 6, 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 6, Lesson 3

Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson teaches students that they can build intelligence by using new approaches and strategies, trying new things, and working through difficulties. The understanding that they can strengthen their brains can help

them achieve more in school and in life.

Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a time you had to learn something new. Explain whether it was hard to learn and how you learned it. Ask your child if there's anything he or she would like to learn to do this year.

Grade 6, Lesson 4

Family Lesson Summary

In this week's lesson, students will learn they can help their brains grow and change by using good strategies, getting help from others, and working hard.

Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a time you needed help from someone else to learn something new. Ask your child to tell you about something he or she is working hard to learn and how you can help.

Grade 6, Lesson 5

Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson is about how people's personalities change as they grow up. Sometimes people's personalities change because of experiences they have, and sometimes because they work hard to change their personalities.

Family Lesson Question

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

Grade 6, 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 6, 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 6, Lesson 8

Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will think about his or her 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 6, Lesson 9

Family Lesson Summary

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

Family Lesson Question

Think of a group your child belongs to outside of school. Ask your child how thinking about his or her values can help him or her be a positive influence on this group.

Grade 6, Lesson 10

Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will explore the values he or she wants in a friend. This will help your child make new friends and be a better friend to others.

Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about his or her friends, including what he or she likes about them.

Grade 6, Lesson 11

Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn ways to make new friends. This can help your child build positive relationships with his or her peers.

Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a friend you made when you were younger, and explain how you became friends with this person. Ask your child how he or she makes friends at school, and what can sometimes make it difficult.

Grade 6, Lesson 12

Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses a fun and engaging activity to practice skills for making friends. 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 made a new friend. Explain what you did and how you did it. Ask your child if there's someone he or she would like to make friends with and how he or she will do so.

Grade 6, Lesson 13

Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn how emotions affect decision making, and that even when your child's emotions feel very strong, he or she can still make good decisions.

Family Lesson Question

Ask your child to describe a time when he or she was angry or upset. Together, talk about the kinds of good decisions your child can make the next time his or her emotions are that strong.

Grade 6, 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 6, 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 to tell you the difference between thoughts and emotions and to describe what an unhelpful thought is. Talk with your child about what to do if an unhelpful thought gets stuck in his or her head.

Grade 6, Lesson 16

Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn skills for calming down when he or she is upset. Identifying good ways to calm down can help your child make good decisions when he or she is angry or upset.

Family Lesson Question

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

Grade 6, 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 angry or upset.

Family Lesson Question

Ask your child about difficult situations he or she might face, either at school or at home. Discuss using slow breathing to calm down and come up with a plan your child can use during these situations.

Grade 6, Lesson 18

Family Lesson Summary

When people disagree about something, it can lead to conflicts. In this week's lesson, your child will practice looking at situations from different perspectives as a way to help prevent conflicts.

Family Lesson Question

Ask your child what it means to look at something from a different perspective. Ask your child to describe an issue he or she feels strongly about, then work together to look at that issue from several different perspectives.

Grade 6, Lesson 19

Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses a fun and engaging activity to practice looking at different perspectives. 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 learned something from thinking about another person's perspective. Explain what you learned and how. Ask your child about some of the different perspectives he or she has encountered at school and talk about how recognizing them can be helpful.

Grade 6, 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 five 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 6, Lesson 21

Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses an engaging activity to practice skills for 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 6, 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 6, Lesson 23

Family Lesson Summary

This week's lesson uses an engaging activity to practice skills for 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 6, Lesson 24

Family Lesson Summary

This week, your child will learn the difference between apologizing and making amends. Making amends means actively doing something to repair the damage caused by a conflict. When children are able to make amends, they're better able to resolve and move beyond conflicts.

Family Lesson Question

Tell your child about a time you made amends to someone for something you'd done. Talk about what you did and why you did it, and what happened afterward. Ask your child if there's anything he or she would like to make amends for, and discuss things he or she could do.

Grade 6, Lesson 25

Family Lesson Summary

In this week's lesson, your child will explore the difficult topic of bullying. While protecting students from bullying is the job of the adults at school, students themselves have a great deal of power to stop bullying by supporting people who are being bullied. In this lesson, your child will think of small, simple things he or she can do to help stop bullying.

Family Lesson Question

Ask your child how he or she can help put a stop to bullying, and talk about what can make it difficult.

Grade 6, Lesson 26

Family Lesson Summary

In this week's lesson, your child will identify people at school he or she is thankful for or appreciates. Exploring ways to express gratitude helps students make positive personal connections, which in turn helps create a safe and supportive school environment.

Family Lesson Question

Talk to your child about what you are thankful for and how you show your gratitude. Ask your child what he or she is thankful for. Together, come up with ideas for how your child can show someone gratitude at home or in your family's social circle.

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!