

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies and the *Second Step* Middle School Program

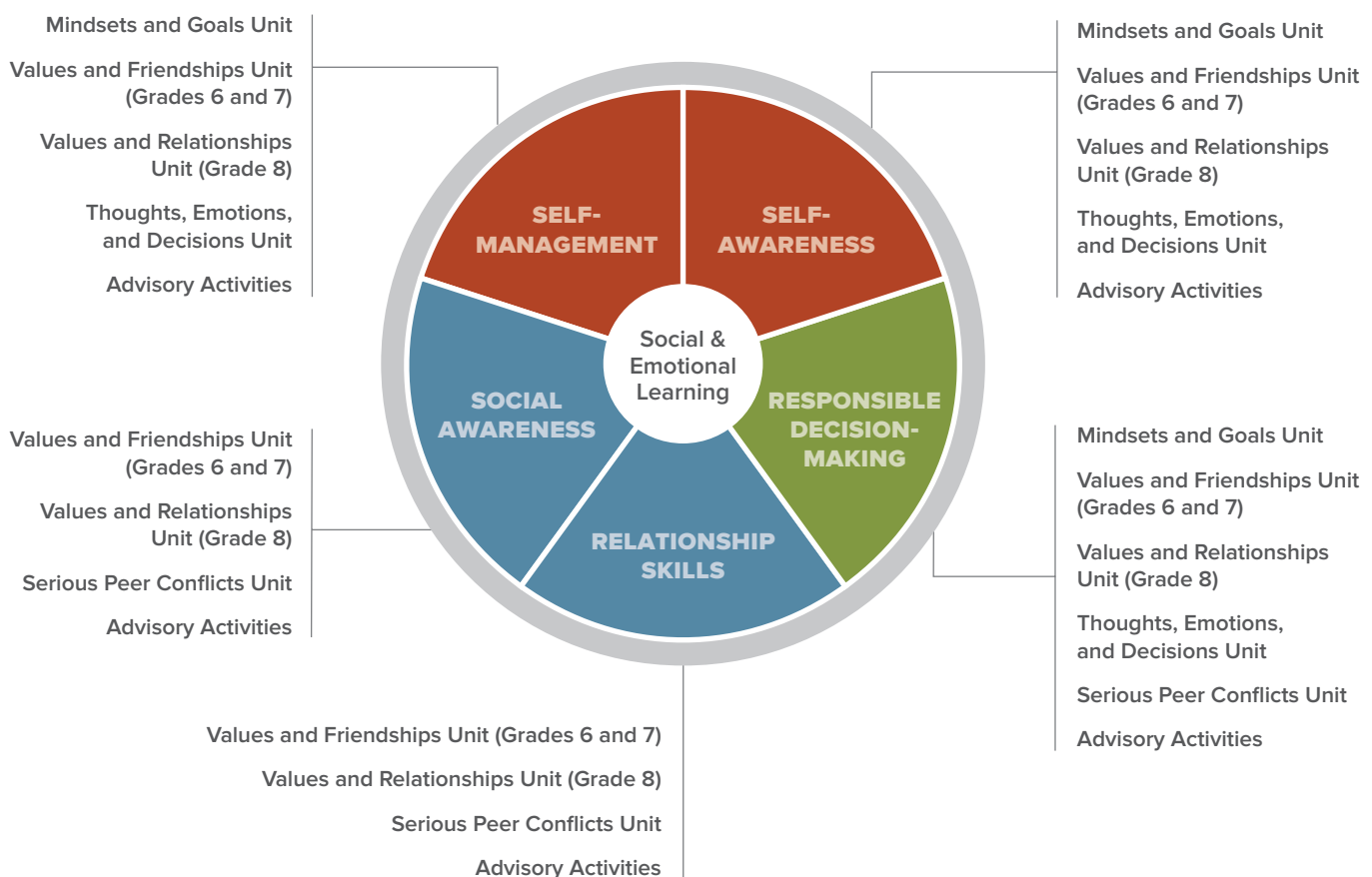
Middle School

WHAT IS CASEL?

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is the nation’s leading organization advancing the development of academic, social, and emotional competence for all students. Its mission is to help make evidence-based social-emotional learning an integral part of education from preschool through high school. To that end, CASEL has identified five interrelated SEL core competencies: self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

WHAT IS THE *SECOND STEP* MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM?

The research-based *Second Step* Middle School Program is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase students’ school success and decrease problem behaviors by promoting social-emotional competence. It helps early adolescent students cope with challenges, create positive relationships, and succeed both socially and academically. Lessons equip students with the mindsets, knowledge, and skills to handle strong emotions, make and follow through on good decisions, and create strong friendships while avoiding or de-escalating peer conflicts.



This diagram illustrates how program elements in the *Second Step* Middle School Program align with CASEL’s core social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies. The SEL competencies are woven throughout the *Second Step* Middle School Program—as shown by the overlap between SEL competencies and elements of the *Second Step* Program. For example, the Responsible Decision-Making competency is addressed in each element of the *Second Step* Program.

HOW DOES THE *SECOND STEP* MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM DEVELOP CORE SEL COMPETENCIES?

The following outlines key skills developed through the various *Second Step* Middle School program elements.

<i>Second Step</i> Program Element	Key Skill(s) Developed	CASEL Core SEL Competencies
Mindsets and Goals Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding that the brain can grow and change Recognizing that personalities can change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Decision-Making Self-Management Self-Awareness
Values and Friendships Unit (Grades 6 and 7) Values and Relationships Unit (Grade 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying personal values Using personal values to make good decisions Making and strengthening friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness
Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handling unhelpful thoughts and strong emotions Using strategies to calm down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Decision-Making Self-Awareness Self-Management
Serious Peer Conflicts Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing different perspectives Recognizing and avoiding serious conflicts Resolving serious conflicts Repairing relationships Helping prevent bullying and harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making Social Awareness
Advisory Activities (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice SEL skills with more than 175 activities (scripted class meetings, relationship-building activities, and service-learning projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness

ABOUT THE *SECOND STEP* PROGRAM

The research-based *Second Step* program is the premier SEL curriculum in the United States, reaching more than 10 million school children in the U.S. every year. The universal, classroom-based program promotes the development of students' social-emotional competence and self-regulation skills. Students with these skills are better able to maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults and have more coping strategies to manage stressful situations. They're also more likely to benefit from academic instruction.

The new *Second Step* Middle School Program for grades 6 through 8 leverages developmental research, web-based technology, and field testing to optimize engagement for this age group. It includes weekly SEL lessons, optional advisory activities, professional learning, and family communications. Grade-specific topics include Mindsets and Goals; Values and Friendships; Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions; and Serious Peer Conflicts.

Learn more at SecondStep.org.