The Effects of Second Step in a Prekindergarten Classroom

Vickie Brandenburg, Advisor Sara Waring-Tiedeman
Graduate School, Northwestern College

Abstract

This action research project was conducted to determine if using Second Step social emotional learning program would affect the frequency and severity of negative behaviors, and if the behaviors would be more effectively managed when the teacher and parents were associated with Second Step in a Prekindergarten classroom setting. Second Step was implemented in the prekindergarten classroom for three weeks. Quantitative data from behavioral observations in the classroom was collected, identifying behavior using behavioral categories. Data was collected from behavior logs, behavior reports and researcher observation. The prekindergarten teacher kept a behavior log and recorded the number of incidents per student. The researcher measured the time the prekindergarten teacher spent managing classroom behaviors, and the time the teacher spent managing student behavior. The researcher also observed the classroom and collected data on student behavior. The classroom teachers were interviewed after the implementation phase. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the gain scores. The results of the study showed that the implementation of Second Step led to a decrease in negative behaviors. The researchers observed a significant decrease in physical aggression, pinching and time spent managing classroom behaviors. The teachers indicated that the implementation of Second Step had a positive impact on student behavior and classroom management. Further studies are needed to determine the long-term effects of implementing Second Step in a prekindergarten classroom.

Introduction

Teaching is more than Common Core, a district approved curriculum, technology and the arts. “Second Step” is an empirically-based social emotional learning program that has been successfully implemented in prekindergarten classrooms. The program is designed to help children develop critical social and emotional skills necessary for success in school and life. The program is based on research and the premise that children learn best through fun and engaging activities. The program consists of twelve lessons taught over a nine-week period. The lessons are designed to be easily integrated into existing curricula and can be taught in a variety of settings.

Method

This action research project was conducted in a children’s center with an all day prekindergarten program serving children four and five years old. The classroom of twelve students consisted of eleven females and one male. The children, 3-5 years old, are considered low socio-economic status. There are 116 English language learners in the classroom. One female teacher, the class was her second. The student is being monitored by the local Area Education Agency and the school district for behavior problems that cannot be resolved within the classroom. The classroom consists of one full time, one part time and one volunteer assistant who works half time. The classroom teacher decided to implement Second Step for her classroom for one hour each day while the lead teacher is taking a break.

The focus of this action research was to determine if the use of Second Step Curriculum reduced the number of negative behaviors in a prekindergarten classroom. The prekindergarten teacher used behavioral observations and a time study to assess the social emotional learning program on behavior in the classroom over a three week period beginning June 11, 2018. The lessons consisted of 10 minute daily lessons, using cue cards, puppets, and modeling. The time study was done to determine the amount of time the teacher spent teaching versus time spent managing classroom behavior.

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Results

Data Analysis

Preliminary research was conducted prior to the implementation of Second Step. The data was collected by the two teachers who work in the prekindergarten classroom using a coding system to provide quantitative data on student behavior and to understand the benefits of a social emotional learning program.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The data was collected using a number of methods, including a daily lesson plan, behavior log, and researcher observation. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the gain scores. The results of the study showed that the implementation of Second Step led to a decrease in negative behaviors. The researchers observed a significant decrease in physical aggression, pinching and time spent managing classroom behaviors. The teachers indicated that the implementation of Second Step had a positive impact on student behavior and classroom management. Further studies are needed to determine the long-term effects of implementing Second Step in a prekindergarten classroom.

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Conclusions

The effects of Second Step in a prekindergarten classroom may vary from school to school and from teacher to teacher. The results of this study suggest that the implementation of Second Step has a positive impact on student behavior and classroom management. Further studies are needed to determine the long-term effects of implementing Second Step in a prekindergarten classroom.

Sources

References


