



CREATORS OF

*Second Step: Skills for Social and Academic Success*

**Dear members of the *Second Step* family,**

By teaching social-emotional skills to your students, you are making real strides toward the realization of a vision we share: safe children thriving in a peaceful world. Last week, this vision was challenged as we learned of the tragic deaths of so many innocent children and caring educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The news of this event was heartbreaking to us at Committee for Children, as I am sure it was for you and those you hold dear.

As more details come to light, we are learning of the heroic actions of Sandy Hook's principal, school psychologist, and teachers, who did not hesitate for a second to put themselves in harm's way for the sake of their students' safety. The stories of these compassionate educators serve as poignant reminders of the vital role you play in teaching, supporting, and creating safe learning environments for your students. You may still be asking yourself, "What can I do to make a difference?" Please remember that in addition to other actions you might be taking in response to this tragedy, you are in fact helping to build a safer, more peaceful world by teaching and reinforcing social-emotional skills with your students, day after day, week after week. Helping children better understand and manage their emotions, show empathy for others, and solve problems peacefully has never been more important.

Your students may be understandably fearful as they hear the repeated stories of this terrifying event on the news or in conversations among adults. We at Committee for Children have reviewed and listed a few key resources below, which we find excellent for guiding educators, administrators, parents, and caregivers in responding appropriately and effectively to children in the face of traumatic events. This information was developed primarily by two outstanding organizations: National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. I hope these resources prove helpful in guiding you, your colleagues, and the families you serve.

- [Coping with a School Shooting \(NAEYC\)](#)
- [Coping with Violence and Trauma \(NASP\)](#)

Though our hearts are heavy, we also feel a rekindled commitment to our vision and mission for children's safety and well-being. It is heartening to know that you and thousands more educators and families share in this vision with us.

With gratitude,

Joan Duffell  
Executive Director  
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**Committee for Children**