



# HOW TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAM ACHIEVE SUCCESSFULLY

Michael E. Bernard, PhD  
Professor, Doctorate in Educational Psychology  
Founder, You Can Do It! Education



Program Achieve Early Childhood



Program Achieve Primary



Program Achieve Secondary

Over the past several decades, we have published social-emotional learning curricula (SEL). In 2018, all our SEL curricula (Program Achieve Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary) were extensively updated and made available online. The recently released 5th edition Program Achieve now includes brain-based activities in lessons. The Early Childhood edition lessons now contain notes for teaching 3 - 4-year-olds.

## NINE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM ACHIEVE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING CURRICULUM (EARLY CHILDHOOD, PRIMARY, SECONDARY)

1. A regular Program Achieve teaching time must be allocated. Without a fixed time commitment in a student's timetable, lessons can be excluded due to the competing needs of teachers and other programs. We understand that finding a regular slot in a busy school timetable can be difficult. Schools that have successfully adopted Program Achieve have used different approaches to help with this by integrating Program Achieve as part of the Health and Physical Education learning area or during pastoral care. Some schools add a special class period one day a week for teaching Program Achieve by shortening the time

Program Achieve is taught during homeroom or tutorial groups, in schools, especially at the secondary level.

2. One 50-60 minute session per week should be reserved for teaching Program Achieve. The exception is with very young children, where twice weekly shorter sessions between 15 and 20 minutes should be used.
3. Program Achieve's (primary, secondary) lessons are at each year level organised around four themes (one per term) with 8 lessons devoted to each;
  1. Achievement (Work Confidence + Persistence + Goal Setting + Time Management + Teamwork),
  2. Relationships (Values + Character Strengths + Getting Along Skills),
  3. Resilience + Happiness,
  4. Social-Emotional Blockers (Worry/Anxiety + Feeling Down + Anger + Not Paying Attention + Procrastination).

To assist with a school-wide implementation, it is ideal if, during each term, the same theme is presented across all year levels. Staff can decide the order in which the 4



four themes will be presented. Sometimes this is decided by the needs of the students; however, we recommended that Social-Emotional Blockers are covered last.

4. There is a Scope and Sequence of 32 lessons per year level, which guide the presentation of Program Achieve. This document can be referred to when deciding the sequence of lessons to be taught each term.
5. Having a YCDI! Coordinator, or even two, can increase the chances of successful implementation. The coordinator/s ensures that teachers stay on track, not just with teaching the lessons on a regular basis but also with providing opportunities for teachers to share their positive outcomes in the classroom. Coordinator/s provide opportunities for teachers to share and explore what more they could be doing in the classroom and throughout the school to further promote the SELs being taught.
6. Teaching Program Achieve at the secondary level requires a different approach to that used in the lower levels. Deciding who teaches Program Achieve at this level is important. Unless teachers and support staff present the lessons with enthusiasm and purposefulness, many students will not engage. Teachers at the secondary level need to understand the importance of integrating SEL into their classes and how this will benefit their own subject areas as well as student wellbeing.
7. Successful implementation of social-emotional learning curricula requires buy-in from all staff. We recommend that staff participate in professional development that not only informs them of the importance of SEL but is directed at their wellbeing and stress management (e.g., see our eLearning course, *The Resilient Educator*, <https://edu.youcandoiteducation.com.au/course/view.php?id=137>).
8. Each lesson allows teachers to evaluate the extent to which students have acquired the knowledge and skills presented. Students Demonstrate Success Criteria and Reflect give students an opportunity to provide input and feedback - especially for those students

who find it more difficult to engage. This concluding section of each lesson will guide you in knowing how much of the content presented in the lesson you need to review with your class and individual students during the week and at the beginning of the next lesson.

9. Outside of SEL lessons, be sure to refer to the content of the lesson presented, with particular attention placed on making the content relevant to the students' lives. Provide students with individual and group behaviour-specific feedback when you see them demonstrating the SELs you have been teaching.

### VERY IMPORTANT

It is crucial for teachers to stay close to the explicit instructions contained in the Lesson Plan, especially for the first and second time Program Achieve is presented. Experience has shown us that while some teachers prefer to present the lessons in their own way, this frequently dilutes the lesson's success in imparting specific knowledge and skills. Once teachers have experience presenting Program Achieve, they can adapt aspects of lessons to their own teaching style with greater confidence and knowledge.

### TAKEAWAYS

1. **Successful Implementation of Program Achieve requires buy-in from all staff as to the importance of social and emotional learning.**
2. **Appointing a YCDI! coordinator to champion Program Achieve at your school greatly increases the chances of success.**
3. **Staff who partake in professional development that aligns SEL with their own stress management and wellbeing are more enthusiastic and engaged when teaching Program Achieve.**

