



Self-Management

ABOUT CENTER FOR THE COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM

The Caring School Community (CSC) program is a nationally recognized, research-based program for grades K-6 that builds classroom and schoolwide community while developing students' social and emotional (SEL) skills and competencies.

Introducing Buddies

By: The Caring School Community

Introducing Buddies

ABOUT BUDDIES

One of the essential components of the Caring School Community program is the cross-age Buddies program, which matches classrooms from different grade levels and pairs the students for regular activities. The *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book* includes 40 Buddies activities and details the academic and social benefits of the program.

This class meeting introduces the students to the Buddies program and prepares them for their first Buddies activity, “A Drawing of My Buddy and Me” (see p. 45 in the *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book*). If you and your buddy teacher choose a different first Buddies activity, use this lesson as a model for how to prepare your students to meet their buddies for the first time.

Schedule the first Buddies activity within a day of this class meeting. This lesson may take more than one class period.

Lesson Purpose

Students:

- Learn about the Buddies program
- Prepare to meet their buddies
- Make drawings and “mail” them to their buddies
- Practice “Think, Pair, Share”
- Build on one another’s thinking

Materials

- *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book*
- Crayons or markers
- Drawing paper for each student
- An envelope for each student

Before the Lesson

Read the introduction to the Buddies program (pp. 10–41 in the *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book*), establish a relationship with your buddy teacher, assign your students buddies, and plan your first Buddies activity.

The Lesson

1 GATHER IN A CIRCLE AND INTRODUCE BUDDIES

Have the students gather in a circle with partners sitting together. Explain that this year each student in the class will have an older buddy and do interesting activities together. Tell the students which class and grade will be their buddy class. Explain that having a buddy will give them a chance to get to know someone from another class. Mention how often they will meet with their buddies. Explain that in the class meeting today they will talk about what it will be like to have an older buddy. After the meeting, the students will draw a picture for their buddies and “mail” their pictures to them.

2 DISCUSS EXPERIENCES WITH OLDER CHILDREN

Explain that the students will practice “Think, Pair, Share” again today to talk about their experiences with older friends. Review that in “Think, Pair, Share” you will ask them a question, and they will think quietly to themselves for a moment. When you say “Turn to your partner,” they will turn and discuss their thinking with their partner until you signal them to turn their attention back to the whole group.

Ask:

Q When have you had an older friend that you looked up to?
What did you do together?

Have the students think quietly for a moment. Say “Turn to your partner” and have partners discuss the question. After a few moments, signal to bring their attention back to you.

Have a few volunteers share their ideas with the class.

A graphic for the 'Think, Pair, Share' strategy. It features a stylized orange 'S' shape on the left, followed by the text 'Think, Pair, Share' in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the text are three orange arrowheads pointing to the right.

Think, Pair, Share

Class Meeting Lessons

3 DISCUSS THE CHALLENGES OF HAVING AN OLDER BUDDY

Explain that sometimes working with an older buddy can be challenging. Use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss:

Q What are some things that might be challenging about working with an older buddy?

As the students share their ideas, facilitate a discussion about problems that might arise with older buddies and possible solutions. Ask follow-up questions like these to encourage the students to build on one another’s ideas:

Q Do you agree or disagree with what [Cleo] said?

Q What are some things you could try if that happens?

Q What can you add to what [Gabrielle] said?

If necessary, remind the students to use the prompts “I agree with ____ because...” or “I disagree with ____ because...”

4 TALK ABOUT WHAT BUDDIES WILL DO TOGETHER

Explain the first activity they will do with their buddies. First, they will make a drawing about something they might like to do with their buddy this year. They will put the picture in an envelope and send it to their buddy. Their older buddies will do the same activity, and they can look forward to getting “mail” from their older buddies.

Then, the younger buddies will go to the older buddies’ classroom. The buddies will meet each other, sit together, and talk about the drawings they sent to each other.

Ask the students to think about activities they might do with their older buddies this year. Use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss:

Q What are some things we do in school that might be fun to do with your older buddy?

Think, Pair, Share



Allow time for the students to discuss their concerns and to ask questions. Younger children are often frightened by “big kids” and need time to talk about their fears. Encourage the students to respond to one another’s concerns by asking questions such as:

Q What ideas do you have about what you might do if that happens?

Q What is a caring way to let your buddy know if something bothers you?

Tell the students the names of their older buddies and ask if anyone knows their buddy.

5 ADJOURN THE MEETING AND MAKE DRAWINGS FOR BUDDIES

Have the students return to their seats. Distribute drawing paper, crayons, and envelopes. Have the students write “To: [older buddy’s name]” and “From: [their name]” on their paper. Have them draw a picture of their buddy and themselves doing something together at school. Have them add a greeting, if they wish.

Have them address their envelope to their older buddy, fold their drawing, and place the drawing in the envelope. Collect the envelopes and have one student deliver the envelopes to your buddy class.



See “A Drawing of My Buddy and Me” on page 45 in the *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book* for a complete description of this Buddies activity.



Work with your buddy teacher to make sure that all the students receive an envelope from their buddy. You might need to wait to distribute the envelopes until you have a complete class set.

After the Lesson

When the older buddies’ “mail” arrives, distribute it to your students and have them look at their pictures. Collect and save the pictures for the Buddies activity, “A Drawing of My Buddy and Me.” Plan to do the activity before you do the Buddies Check-in lesson.