



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, in which every class in the school is paired with a buddy class from another grade level for regular activities. The *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book* outlines 40 activities, describes the academic and social benefits of the program, and explains in detail how to prepare for and conduct the Buddies activities. Before you start your Buddies program, read the *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book*, establish a buddy relationship with another teacher, assign your students buddies, and plan your first Buddies activity, “A Drawing of My Buddy and Me,” with your buddy teacher. (See p. 45 in the *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book*.) If you and your buddy teacher do a different activity first, substitute that activity’s preparation in steps 4 and 5 of this lesson.

This lesson outlines a class meeting that prepares students to meet their buddies for the first time. Plan to schedule the first Buddies activity within a day of this meeting.

This lesson may take more than one class period.

Lesson Purpose

Students:

- Prepare to meet their buddies
- Make drawings and “mail” them to their buddies
- Build on one another’s thinking

The Lesson

1 GATHER FOR A CLASS MEETING AND INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

Have the students gather for a class meeting with partners sitting together.

Materials

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

BEGINNING-OF-YEAR LESSON



For Grades 2–3

Students in grades 2 and 3 may be the younger buddy in the pair. If this is the case, adapt this lesson to prepare the students to meet their older buddies. For example, instead of asking “What might be challenging about working with a younger buddy?” ask “What might be challenging about working with an older buddy?”



Turn to Your Partner

Explain that this year each student will have a younger (or older) student as a buddy. Having a buddy will give them a chance to get to know someone from another class. Tell the students which class will be their buddy class. Mention that they will meet with their buddies often and have a chance to do interesting activities together. Explain that in the class meeting today they will talk about what it will be like to have a [younger] buddy. After the meeting, each student will draw a picture for her buddy and “mail” the picture to the buddy.

2 DISCUSS EXPERIENCES WITH FRIENDS

Begin the discussion by telling the students about a time when you had an older friend or when an older student was kind to you.

Ask and briefly discuss:

- Q** Have you ever had an older friend that you looked up to? Tell us about it.
- Q** Have you been an older friend to a younger child? Tell us about it.

3 DISCUSS THE CHALLENGES OF HAVING A YOUNGER BUDDY

Explain that sometimes working with a younger buddy can be challenging. First in pairs and then as a class, discuss:

- Q** What might be challenging about working with a younger buddy?

As the students share their thinking, facilitate a discussion about problems that might arise and possible solutions. To encourage the students to build on one another’s thinking, ask follow-up questions such as:

- Q** What are some things you could try if you encounter the challenge that [Marisol] shared?
- Q** What can you add to what [Gabrielle] said?

Class Meeting Lessons



Use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss:

Q What are some worries your younger buddy might have about spending time with someone older?

Have several pairs share their ideas with the class. Ask follow-up questions such as:

Q What are some things you can do to help your younger buddy feel more comfortable? What kinds of things might you want to avoid doing?

Students might say:

“We can make sure that we are patient.”

“I agree with [Michael]; we should be patient, and we shouldn’t be mean to them.”

“In addition to what [Shaila] said, I think we shouldn’t make them talk if they’re shy.”

If necessary, remind the students to use the prompts “I agree with ____ because...,” “I disagree with ____ because...,” and “In addition to what ____ said, I think....”

4 TALK ABOUT WHAT BUDDIES WILL DO TOGETHER AND ADJOURN THE MEETING

Explain that the first Buddies activity will be to exchange drawings of things they might like to do with their buddy. Briefly explain what will happen: Younger buddies will come to the older buddies’ classroom, the buddies will meet each other, and the older buddy will welcome the younger buddy. The buddies will sit together and talk about their drawings. Ask and briefly discuss:

Q When you meet your younger buddy, what might be the first thing you say or do to help your buddy feel comfortable with you?

Use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss:

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

Think, Pair, Share



Explain that the students will draw a picture of something they might do with their buddy, write a greeting on the picture, put it in an envelope, and send it to their new buddy. Their buddies will do the same activity, and they can look forward to getting “mail” from them. Tell the students the names of their buddies.

Adjourn the meeting and have the students return to their seats.

5 MAKE DRAWINGS FOR BUDDIES

Distribute drawing paper, crayons, and envelopes. Have the students write “To: [younger buddy’s name]” and “From: [their name]” in the upper right corner of their drawing paper. Remind the students that they will write a greeting on their drawing. Ask and briefly discuss:

Q What might you write to your buddy on your drawing?

Students might say:

“We could write ‘Hi, my name is Paulie, and I want to read with you.’”

“I’m going to write ‘My name is Josie. I’d like to play four-square with you. What would you like to do?’”

Circulate as the students draw and, if necessary, help with spelling buddies’ names. Let the students know when they have about two minutes left to draw.

Have the students address their envelopes. Collect the envelopes and have one student deliver them to your buddy class.

When the younger buddies’ “mail” arrives, distribute the envelopes and give the students time to look at the pictures. Have the students save the pictures for the buddy activity.



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

After the Lesson

See “A Drawing of My Buddy and Me” on page 45 in the *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book* for a complete description of the Buddies activity. Plan to do the activity with your buddy class before your next class meeting, Buddies Check-in.