

What is a Reading Buddy?

Reading Buddies meet with one student for thirty minutes each week throughout the school year. Most volunteers meet with second or third grade students. They offer consistent encouragement to the student as they listen to them read and discuss what was read. Students with this support show an increase in reading levels/scores by the end of the school year.

Some schools may be interested in other forms of mentoring such as practicing math facts with a student or working with an ESL student.

First Steps

- Determine the school's volunteer guidelines and security protocols regarding child safety. At the least, volunteers will be asked to have a background check.
- Some schools provide volunteer training. If they do not, Heart4Schools will be happy to provide Reading Buddy or mentor training.
- Talk with your assigned Reading Buddy's teacher about the best time and location for you to meet. This should be a place where you are always visible to others. A volunteer should never be in the room with a student by themselves.
- Ask the teacher if they will provide a book on your buddy's reading level or if you should bring a book. (Do not bring Bible stories or Bibles.)
- Exchange email addresses with the teacher so that you can have continued conversation.
- Build positive relationships with administrators and staff.



Working with Students

- Arrive on time so that students will not miss instructional time or be late to another activity.
- Spend the first five minutes talking with the student and getting to know him/her and building relationships. This can also be done as you are walking to your meeting area.
- You will spend time listening to your buddy read and reading to him/her. You might let them decide who goes first. Read to them with expression and take time to look at pictures. Make your time together fun!
- Your teacher may give you a list of questions to ask after reading. If not, feel free to naturally ask questions about what you have read. Ask: details about the story; favorite character; what they enjoyed most; what happened first; and what happened next (sequencing).
- If your Reading Buddy shares something of concern with you, discreetly share with his/her teacher.
- If you are unable to come to school on your scheduled day, let your Reading Buddy's teacher know ahead of time. Your buddy will be looking forward to seeing you!