

Virtual Reading Buddies Program Plan

Brief Description: Reading Buddies pairs a school-age child with a teen “big buddy” for a fun and informal reading practice once a week through Zoom

Age Range: Big Buddies: 13-18; Little Buddies: Grades 2-4

Registration Required: Yes. Take telephone or email registration as needed. Program facilitators will check the references for teens, interview teens, and contact them to let them know they’ve been accepted. Branch staff to send a reminder email to all participants before the first session.

Max # of Participants: 10 to 15 pairs depending on space and staffing; it is a good idea to register a few more teens than little buddies.

Staffing: Recommended to have 1 staff per 5 teen/child pairs (i.e. 3 staff members for 15 teens and 15 kids). If possible, also have an extra staff on hand to act as a technical host. Teen training led by Program Facilitator and Technical Host one week before.

Equipment:

- Teens and kids are asked to use their own devices. Phones not recommended due to small screen size.
- Staff need one iPad to monitor each teen/child pair, plus an iPad/laptop for themselves
- One laptop for the technical cohost. Breakout rooms can only be started from a laptop/desktop on Zoom.
- Headset for each staff member.

Space: Enough space to accommodate 3 staff people with 5-6 devices each.

Material

Big Buddies

- Big Buddies Volunteer Application – via LimeSurvey
- Big Buddies Information Package (*for Teen Training session*)
- Little Buddies Reading Record
- Big Buddies Certificate of Appreciation – email after last session

Little Buddies

- Little Buddies Certification of Completion – email after last session

Facilitator

- Registration list

Zoom Settings:

- Breakout Rooms allowed
- Screen sharing allowed by participants
- Annotation allowed – necessary for games & activities. Better to turn this on when needed part-way through the program

Links:

Reading Buddies book list: <https://vpl.overdrive.com/library/kids/collection/1122352>

Session Schedule for Facilitators*

** The times listed on this schedule are flexible and are meant to provide a general guideline.*

Use information from the registration forms and teen training to assign pairs. The buddies will meet in these same pairs each week. However, you will often have to adjust the pairings to accommodate buddies who are away.

Time	Program host(s) Co-host in Zoom	Technical Host Host in Zoom (manages Breakout Rooms)
30 minutes before	<p>Set up stations. Each facilitator station should have 5 ipads. Turn off iPad volume before logging iPad into zoom.</p> <p>Make sure iPads are muted.</p> <p>Set the Zoom name for each iPad to VPL Staff – NAME – 1, VPL Staff – NAME – 2, etc.</p> <p>Pull up link to RB reading resources list on each ipad.</p> <p>Plug headset into primary device, which will be left in the Living Room.</p>	<p>Create breakout rooms and assign one ipad to each of them.</p> <p>Test that non-hosts can screenshare.</p> <p>Set an alarm for the 35 minutes into the program for a 5 minute warning.</p>
5-10 minutes before:	Let teens into the program, welcome them individually by name. Tell them the name of	Assign each teen to a breakout room in accordance with the sign-

Teens begin arriving	their (probable) younger buddy	in sheet. Capture attendance.
Program begins	Let kids into the program, welcome them individually by name. Ask them to change their name to their own name (not parents) and explain how as needed.	
5 minutes	<p>Welcome to Virtual Reading Buddies!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff introductions/roles • This is a pilot! We want to hear about problems! And good things! • Program expectations • How does Virtual Reading Buddies work? • What if something goes wrong? How do I reach a staff person? 	<p>Reassign teens/kids as needed to cover gaps</p> <p>When ready, announce pairs.</p> <p>Assign each participant to a breakout room with their corresponding teen. Capture attendance.</p>
<p>10 minutes</p> <p>Getting to Know your Buddy activity</p> <p>Pick out books</p> <p>Begin reading</p>	<p>Drop into each breakout room by turning on the microphone and camera. Say hi and share the reading/book list.</p> <p>Troubleshoot screenshare as needed. Pairs may need help finding an appropriate book.</p> <p><i>I'm going to disappear into the background, but I'm still here. Say my name if you need anything.</i></p>	<p>Send everyone into breakout rooms; technical troubleshooting.</p>
30 minutes (earlier as needed)	Share the Games & Activities list	
35 minutes	Make sure everyone has seen the warning. Sometimes they don't!	Five minute warning

40 minutes	How did it go? Drop the title of one of the books you read into the chat. Thanks for coming, see you next week. Teens, stick around for a few minutes.	Close breakout rooms
45 minutes	Debrief with teens. Encourage them to share examples of successes and see if they have any concerns or questions. Ask them to write down the books they read in their Reading Record	
50 minutes	Quick cohost debrief; report stats.	

Overview of a Session

- **Set up the space** Set up a laptop and 5 ipads for the Technical Host and 5 ipads for each other Program Host, making sure there is space between stations for proper social distancing. The Technical Host should have a printed copy of the sign-in sheet if possible.
- **Log into the Zoom meeting** 30 minutes before the program. Sign in on each device. On the ipads, set the name to VPL Staff – NAME – 1, VPL Staff – NAME – 2, etc. The technical cohost will assign each of these to a breakout room. The primary device each staff member is using will say only their name. As needed, primary devices can be assigned to breakout rooms. The Technical Facilitator laptop should stay in the main room to deal with any issues that arise.

10 minutes before: Big Buddies Arrive – Teens should ideally arrive 5-10 minutes before the program start time so that they can be assigned to breakout rooms. During subsequent weeks, they can greet their buddies in the chat.

4:00 – 4:05 Little Buddies Arrive – Let in little buddies from the waiting room as they arrive. Greet them by name. Check off the participant's names on the sign in sheet.

4:05 – 4:10 Pair-up Buddies – Once it looks like everyone who will be coming has arrived, call out the names of the pairs. If you have some no-shows, get the spares to join in with another pairing for this session. Ideally you will have an extra teen or two and not have to pair two little buddies with one big buddy.

4:10 – 4:15 ‘Getting To Know Your Buddy’ Activity

Make sure the teens have a Reading Record for their buddy. Little buddies can keep track of their own as needed.

4:15 – 4:25- Pick Out Books – The teens have gone through the Reading Buddies Resources List and their training included how to pick an appropriate book. You may be needed for suggesting or finding titles during this portion. It is okay for Little Buddies to use a book from home if they are reading to their big buddy.

4:25 – 4:40- Reading Practice – This may include the little buddy reading to their big buddy, both of them reading together, or the big buddy reading to the little buddy. During this time, you’ll be on hand to help the teens if needed (see the *Tips* section below), but for the most part the pairs are self-sufficient.

4:40 – Goodbyes,

5:00-5:10 – Debrief with Teens – Once all of the little buddies have gone, gather the teen volunteers and have a quick debrief. Encourage them to share examples of successes and see if they have any concerns or questions.

Regular Session

Time	Program host(s) Co-host in Zoom	Technical Host Host in Zoom (manages Breakout Rooms)
30 minutes before	Set up stations and begin logging ipads onto zoom. Set the Zoom name for each iPad to VPL Staff – NAME – 1, VPL Staff – NAME – 2, etc Test that non-hosts can screenshare. Microphones on these should be muted and cameras off! Volume on. Pull up link to RB reading resources list on each ipad.	Create breakout rooms and assign one ipad to each of them. Set an alarm for 35 minutes into the program for a 5 minute warning.

5-10 minutes before: Teens begin arriving	Let teens into the program, welcome them individually by name.	Assign each teen to a breakout room in accordance with the sign-in sheet. Capture attendance.
Program begins	Let kids into the program, welcome them individually by name. Teens greet their buddies in chat.	Capture attendance.
5 minutes	Welcome to Virtual Reading Buddies! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder on how to reach a staff person 	Assign each participant to a breakout room with their corresponding teen.
10 minutes Pick out books Begin reading	Drop into each breakout room by turning on the microphone and camera. Say hi and share the reading/book list. Troubleshoot screenshare as needed. Pairs may need help finding an appropriate book. <i>I'm going to disappear into the background, but I'm still here. Say my name if you need anything.</i>	Send everyone into breakout rooms; technical troubleshooting.
25 minutes (earlier as needed)	Share the Games & Activities list	
35 minutes	Make sure everyone has seen the warning. Sometimes they don't!	Five minute warning
40 minutes	How did it go? Drop the title of one of the books you read into the chat. Thanks for coming, see you next week. Teens, stick around for a few minutes.	Close breakout rooms

45 minutes	Debrief with teens. Encourage them to share examples of successes and see if they have any concerns or questions. Ask them to write down the books they read in their Reading Record	
50 minutes	Quick cohost debrief; report stats	

Last Session

Prep

- Fill out a **Certificate of Appreciation** for each big buddy and a **Certificate of Completion** for each little buddy.

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5-10 minutes before: Teens begin arriving	Let teens into the program, welcome them individually by name.	Assign each teen to a breakout room in

		accordance with the sign-in sheet. Capture attendance.
Program begins	Let kids into the program, welcome them individually by name. Teens greet their buddies.	Capture attendance.
5 minutes	<p>Welcome to Virtual Reading Buddies!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder on how to reach a staff person 	Assign each participant to a breakout room with their corresponding teen.
<p>10 minutes</p> <p>Pick out books</p> <p>Begin reading</p>	<p>Drop into each breakout room by turning on the microphone and camera. Say hi and share the reading/book list. Troubleshoot screenshare as needed. Pairs may need help finding an appropriate book.</p> <p><i>I'm going to disappear into the background, but I'm still here. Say my name if you need anything.</i></p>	Send everyone into breakout rooms; technical troubleshooting.
20 minutes (earlier as needed)	Share the Games & Activities list	Turn on annotation
25 minutes	Make sure everyone has seen the warning. Sometimes they don't!	Five minute warning
30 minutes	Thank everyone for participating in the pilot. Tell them they'll be going into breakout rooms again to tell us about their experience.	Close breakout rooms & create new breakout rooms – one for little buddies and one for big buddies
40 minutes	Thank everyone for coming and participating.	Close breakout rooms

	Show examples of the certificates that will be emailed to teens and kids.	
65 minutes	Quick cohost debrief; report stats	

Follow-up – One week after the session, email a LimeSurvey link to teens and parents who have agreed to be contacted.

Tips

When to intervene/assist during Reading Buddies

During the teen training session, teens are advised on when to ask for support from staff (though this is a rare occurrence). Take the lead from them and, in most cases, wait and let the teen volunteer take a chance to work out any issues with their little buddy. This will allow them to problem-solve and develop the relationship with their buddy.

Scenario	Action
Little buddy refuses to read	Suggest that the teen reads to the little buddy or that they read together, maybe from a different type of book, ie. graphic novel, joke book or puzzle book. You can also have the teen redirect them to drawing or playing literacy games, and give reading another try later.
Inappropriate behaviour (acting out, being rowdy etc.)	Suggest alternate activity (see above). Librarian may choose to contact the parent about how to best participate in Reading Buddies.
Teen and little buddy don't get along	If it is a minor incompatibility, talk to the teen after the debrief to see if the problem can be resolved. If not, assign a new buddy for the next session. If the situation requires immediate attention, separate the pair for the rest of the session.
A parent of a little buddy would like to contact a teen outside of the library (for babysitting etc.).	Let them know that this is not acceptable