

# Reading Buddy Guide (Fall 2021)

Each 8-week session begins with a phone call with your student(s), followed by a weekly note for the next 6 weeks, and then ending with a one more call to celebrate your student's progress.

## The Phone Calls (Weeks 1 & 8):

- The student will **select 8 books at the "Reading Buddy Bookstore"**; one book to take with him this week, and then the other books will be delivered weekly.
- At the call time (**note that it will be approximately 15 minutes later than your scheduled time**), I will introduce you. The purpose of the call is to reconnect (for those who met with the same student last year) or get to know each other (for new students). I like to call these calls "connection calls". :)
- **You will have about 3-12 minutes (at most) for your call** (and if your child isn't talkative, that's ok too-- just hearing your voice is a win, and a short, 3 minute phone call is totally fine!).
- **A good place to start is to ask them to tell you about the books they just picked out** (you'll get a list later too). They will be taking one book back to class, so you could ask him which book is going with him today. Depending on your student, you could ask if they want to read a page or two from their new book out loud to you (if they stumble over a word, have them spell it to you so you can help).
- **Other ideas for get-to-know-you questions:** favorite animal, pet, something he does for fun, favorite food, something she wants to read about, etc.
- **Don't stress over this phone call!** The student is going to be excited to get this one-on-one attention, and have a phone call with his buddy . . . you don't need to entertain him or talk for even more than just a few minutes. The goal is just for him to hear your voice, and to know you care enough to listen.



## The Notes (Weeks 2-7):

1. On Monday mornings, I will check the students' mailbox at school, and email or text a photo to you of any notes from your students that I have received. You will get a reminder text (via a group text on Remind) about sending a note that week.
2. **I need a note from you by Wednesday morning, 9 am.** For a reminder of which week # we're on (so you know what book the student is getting), check out the calendar link at [www.evertreads.org/buddyresources](http://www.evertreads.org/buddyresources).
3. During the day on Wednesday, I will print your notes (if needed), package with a book, and deliver the "mail" to the students.



## What to write about:

The purposes of the notes are to build relationships, communicate value ("you matter"), and encourage kids towards reading.

- **Building relationships:** Share things about your life (kids love to hear about pets, your hobbies, your grandkids, etc). Feel free to attach photos for me to print. From your phone call, you will get ideas of things to ask them about ("how is your dog?", etc).
- **Communicating value:** Simply the act of sending a note communicates value, but affirming words are important too: "I know you can do this", "you're smart", "great job", etc.

- **Encouraging the student towards reading:** Mention his book, for example, "It looks like this book is about whales and giant squids-- I'd love to hear one thing you learn from this book!". You could make real-world connections with the book (ie, "My family went whale watching . . .").

## Other ideas:

For more ideas of things to include in your note, check out [www.evartreads.org/buddyresources](http://www.evartreads.org/buddyresources). Note: these are all just ideas-- feel free to keep it simple! Also, keep in mind the reading level of your kiddos-- they will be more likely to read it on their own if it is short (but they will have help reading the note if needed). **Most students can't read cursive.** Notes can be very short (2-3 lines is just fine!), or longer if you wish. There is no competition to have the best note, so **just relax and be yourself.** :)

## Including other things with notes:

Please don't send any food, but small items like stickers, additional books, pencils, etc, are ok occasionally. Keep in mind that the best gift you're giving is your time, so just sending notes is totally fine! :)

## Delivery of notes:

I really want this to be easy for you! Feel free to just email a few lines to [roundsj@evartps.org](mailto:roundsj@evartps.org), or attach it as a document. You can also hand write it, take a photo, and then text/email it, and I will print that out. Or just shoot me a couple of lines of text at 231-515-2016! Or mail or drop off a note at the Elementary School (515 N. Cedar St., Evart, MI 49631) in the tote labeled "Reading Buddies" inside the entryway.

## Notes from students to you:

Last year about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the students wrote back each week. Some of you will not receive any return mail, and I appreciate your willingness to continue without hearing anything in return. It really depends on the class, and if anyone is available to help students write back, plus there are many absences, letters taken home, etc. Please know that your notes are very much appreciated by the kids, even if you never receive a reply.

## Thanksgiving week:

There is no school Weds-Fri of Thanksgiving, so I will need notes by Tuesday, 9 am of that week.

## Virtual students/snow days:

If your student is quarantined, we will continue to try to get the weekly book/note to the student. In case of a snow day, we will adjust the schedule as needed.

**IMPORTANT:** Please protect student privacy; don't share any photos of students on social media.

## Looking ahead:

A second session is planned for Feb/March of 2022, but at the moment, I don't know what that will look like. I'll keep you posted, and you can let me know if you want to participate in another session.

## THANK YOU!

When you take the time to call and/or write notes, it communicates to these students that someone thinks they have value, and kids are strengthened to embrace learning in the midst of whatever life brings. You are greatly appreciated!!

Please contact me with any questions at [roundsj@evartps.org](mailto:roundsj@evartps.org) or 231-515-2016.

Thank you!

