

Tips for a Successful Cross-Age Buddy Program

1. Successful cross-age buddy literacy programs require cooperation between all parties. Make sure that all students and teachers are prepared and understand the desired outcome.
2. When you are pairing students, try to choose partners with common interests. Same-gender pairs are often most successful, especially for young children.
3. Make sure you have a large enough space for the buddies to comfortably work and that you have an adequate number of computers and other materials.
4. Prior to beginning a buddy computer experience, give the big buddies training on the computer program(s) they will use.
5. Each teacher should spend time establishing rules and requirements of the program. You might want to hold a collective brainstorming session with all students to create a list of procedures.
6. Prior to the first buddy session, each teacher should spend time with his or her students going over the agreed-upon procedures. Ask students to share any concerns. Provide some possible scenarios and have students contribute solutions. For example, you could ask,
 - What would you do if your buddy took over and wouldn't let you have a turn?
 - What would you do if you felt shy with your buddy?
 - What would you do if your buddy didn't talk to you?
 - What would you do if you were unsure of how to ask your buddy a question?

