Book Buddies

Overview

Book Buddies is a new program at St. Charles Public Library, begun in Summer 2010. It was begun in response to a request from a student who was then in 4th grade. It is modeled after several Book Buddies programs in other area libraries. Students in 6th through 8th grade read, discuss and play literacy games with younger students in 1st and 2nd grade. Middle school students who want to participate must turn in applications, with two references. Most are called in for interviews. The program is offered year-round. There are three seasons for which Book Buddies may apply: summer, fall and winter/spring.

Time Commitment

Middle School Book Buddies are scheduled for 2-hour intervals, up to five times per season. They must be available for at least 6 out of 10 weeks each season. Each interval includes two sessions, each session one-on-one with a younger Book Buddy.

Training

All Middle School Book Buddies are required to attend a training session. The following is an outline of what we go over during a training session.

Book Buddy Agreements, outlining what is required, are given out, along with their scheduled sessions. Copies are sent home with students.

The purpose of Book Buddy sessions is stressed: to read together and enjoy books. Middle School Book Buddies help younger buddies to stay on track. Between buddy sessions, Middle School Book Buddies are encouraged to enjoy their own books, as role models for younger Buddies.

Younger Buddies choose books to read and do most of the reading. When a Buddy is stuck on a word, Middle School Book Buddies help them to figure it for themselves. If the younger Buddy chooses, the Middle School Book Buddies may alternate reading. During reading, discussion about the book is encouraged.

If Middle School Book Buddies feel that the book is too hard, they can suggest another, easier one. There is a selection of books available, (our “library”). Reading levels are from 1.0 (first grade. zero months) to 3.9 (third grade.nine months), based on the Gunning Fog Index. If the younger Buddy has one of our JRs, the reading level can be used to choose a book one or two levels lower. Middle School Book Buddies may also choose the lowest level (1.0 or 2.0) for the grade to give them some confidence. They may also use the 5-finger rule.

Library
Our Beginning Readers database is demonstrated. This is an Excel database on our website that lists all our readers according to their assigned reading level. After a reminder of how to find books in the JR Readers collection, each Middle School Book Buddy is assigned to find one book in each reading level for our "library."

Games
Games may be played as a break from reading. There are two simple games each session. The Middle School Book Buddies teach the game.
Games:

1. Getting to know you beach ball.
   - Conversational questions are taped to the sections of a beach ball, which is tossed back and forth.
2. Book Jacket Memory.
3. Max's Words from the book by Kate Banks
   - Use Max's collected words from the story to make up sentences.
4. Act out a story with puppets. The story we have been using is Three Billy Goats Gruff.
   - Use the book for the script.
5. Hangman.
6. Make up a story together using a starting sentence.

As part of training, Book Buddies are asked to make up questions for the beach ball and some starting sentences for the stories.

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