

# REACH...



Tool 4.9

*Respect* parent roles and their diversity

*Engagement*, not just involvement

All families want their children to be successful so *Ask* what they need

*Curriculum* of the home

*Help* at home with knowledge and skills

**Strategy Name:** Book Buddies

**Summary of Strategy:** Book Buddies is a one-on-one community volunteer program that plays an integral role in the goal to ensure that all first and second grade students learn to read and write. Book Buddies promotes strong community involvement using a cost-effective program to meet the educational needs of children in the primary grades. Parents, community volunteers, university students and faculty, and school personnel work together to provide instruction in four components of literacy; rereading for fluency, word study, writing, and new reading. A three-year study found that the tutorial program significantly increased reading skills and achievement in low-achieving first and second graders, as measured by pre- and post-tests. Although students were not randomly assigned to comparison groups, the study found that students that attended more sessions gained significantly more than students that attended fewer sessions. By recruiting parents as tutors, the project meets REACH Links *Engagement, not just involvement* and *Help at home with knowledge and skills*.

**REACH Links:** *Engagement, not just involvement* and *Help at home with knowledge and skills*.

**Scientifically Based Research Level:** Level 4 – Strong Evidence

**Website Links:** <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/reading/projects/bookbuddies/home.html>

**Target Audience of Strategy:** Parents of first and second grade students

**Research Population:** At-risk readers

**Training and Follow-up Support for Implementation:** The tutoring is provided by community volunteers who teach from a lesson plan prepared by reading specialists. Volunteers are recruited by a volunteer coordinator and placed with an on-site book buddies coordinator at a local elementary school. The reading specialists provide formal research-based training twice a year and provide ongoing on-site support throughout the year. School districts and other organizations seeking to implement a Book Buddies reading tutorial from scratch are encouraged to take the Book Buddies course on-line at <http://www.uliveandlearn.com/courses>. The Book Buddies tutoring/training manual and video tape are included in the price of the on-line course (\$149).

**Role of the Educator in Implementation:** The on-site reading coordinator writes individualized lesson plans for each child and supervises the tutorials, modeling instruction and providing feedback. Actual tutoring is provided by the volunteers. The time commitment for tutors is two days per week for approximately one hour each day. The hour includes 15 minutes to review the lesson plan and 45 minutes for the actual tutoring. The days and times for each volunteer are flexible. Book Buddies are scheduled during a time when students do not miss direct instruction with the classroom teacher.