



Eliminating Barriers. Inspiring Young Minds.

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**BUILD-A-BEAR**  
FOUNDATION 

# Meet Your Reading Buddy!



Reading to a furry friend is a powerful way to build literacy skills! When a reader shares a story with their teddy bear, they can practice reading **without fear of judgment**. A furry friend provides a **warm embrace**, **keeps secrets**, and **listens happily** while a reader carefully shares a story or sounds out words at their own pace. Together, through the power of **friendship and imagination**, your students and their teddy bear can discover **the joy of reading**, one story at a time.

Read to Me!



First Book and Build-A-Bear Foundation are thrilled to gift this **READING BUDDY** to you and your students!

A few ways to welcome your bear into your classroom community:

- Introduce your bear to the class. Let each student hold it and say hi.
- Name your new bear! Use the birth certificate provided to lead the activity.
- Create ways for students to bring your bear to life! Write a short story about the bear's adventures or draw pictures of its secret skill.
- Choose a special spot for the bear to live - a cozy reading nook, a story time chair, a sensory area, or a chill-out corner. Having something to hug, confide in, or squeeze really hard is a nondestructive way to let strong emotions dissipate.
- Send it home with students for the weekend! Share pictures of their adventures together on a classroom learning platform or social media.
- In reading circles, use your bear as a talking stick or sounding board ("Tell our reading buddy what you thought of this book"). Let students decide what kind of books their reading buddy likes to read, and what its best skills are as a reader. This helps students identify their own strengths also.
- Reading buddies can be paired with behavior incentives. When someone is, say, a great listener or demonstrates extra kindness, let them care for your beloved reading buddy for the day.
- Remind students that they're never too old to love and be loved, to have a friend and to be a friend to others - bears included.

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Share your reading buddy photos and creative teaching ideas on social media — tag @FirstBook and @BuildABearFoundation #NCTE2023 #FirstBook #BuildABear