

Carl Junction Bright Futures Bulldog Buddy Program

What is a Bulldog Buddy?

A Bulldog Buddy is a caring adult volunteer who has been matched with a student at one of the Carl Junction elementary schools. The student has been identified as needing positive recognition and the benefits of individual adult attention. The volunteer and child meet twice a month during the school year for breakfast, lunch, or recess. All Bulldog Buddy activities take place during the child's scheduled breakfast, lunch, or recess period, on school grounds. Bulldog Buddy activities last approximately 30 minutes, depending on the child's schedule. The Bulldog Buddy Program gives adults a chance to make a difference in Carl Junction's future by getting to know the children of our community. The Bulldog Buddy Program also brings another caring person into the life of a child and offers children the opportunity to have adult friends.

What Do Bulldog Buddies Do?

Bulldog Buddies have an opportunity to connect by sharing a meal together and then spending the rest of the time in a variety of activities such as reading together, playing games, or talking. Bulldog Buddies do not provide the meal for their buddy.

How Do Kids Benefit?

The students benefit in a lot of ways. They get to have a special, healthy relationship with an adult friend ... someone who will listen to them, talk with them, and laugh with them. A positive relationship can greatly enhance a child's self-esteem. When children's self-esteem is positive, they are more successful in school. So, having a Bulldog Buddy - a very special privilege - can mean that participating children will achieve more in school.

Whether the Buddies play board games, read a book, have breakfast or lunch, or just listen, the relationship promotes a positive school experience for the child: good attendance, positive peer and adult relationships, a positive attitude and academic enrichment. As the friendship evolves over time the volunteer and child discover ways to make school and learning fun. When a match continues from one school year to the next, the volunteer experiences the satisfaction of watching their "Little Buddy" achieve success in school.

What Will Volunteers Gain From the Experience?

Adult volunteers will have a relationship with a child who considers them a friend. There will be the satisfaction of knowing you have made a difference for a child.

Being a Bulldog Buddy will also give you the opportunity to learn more about the problems and challenges faced by schools and kids today. Not only will you know that you've made a positive contribution to your community now and for the future, but you'll have fun too!

What Are the Qualifications for Being a Bulldog Buddy?

You must be willing to make a commitment to spend time, approximately 30 minutes, with your buddy at least twice a month and have the ability and desire to talk to children. You should have an appreciation of the problems faced by many children today and be willing to respect the confidentiality of your relationship with the child.

Being important to a child doesn't take much more than that, but the impact can be huge—for both of you. You don't need special training or certification. If you are 18+ years of age, a high school graduate, able to listen, be encouraging, help build self-confidence, and you can commit to 30 minutes, twice a month, for the full school year then you're ready to be a Bulldog Buddy.

Kids who feel better about themselves do better in school—so share a smile and a laugh over lunch and be a part of something big.

For more information on the Bulldog Buddy program or any of the programs offered—through Bright Futures, call 417-649-7026.