

## How Reading Buddy openings are assigned-----

Reading Buddies is a very popular program and therefore always has a waiting list. Parents whose children wait one, two or even three semesters to get into the program sometimes find this to be a very frustrating situation, particularly because our procedures for filling openings can be confusing to the casual observer; this is due to the high number of factors that are taken into account when making the matches.

It is important to note that Reading Buddies is a reading program, not an ESL program; our big buddies are not trained in how to teach a child English, so children who are not particularly fluent in English are encouraged to seek help through Boulder Valley Schools' ESL programs and are discouraged from trying to enroll in this program.

**First and foremost, it is important to know that enrollment is not a matter of filling slots; it is a process of carefully matching little buddies to their most appropriate big buddies.** Therefore, it is also not done on a first-come, first-served basis.

Former little buddies are re-enrolled first, until they have received four semesters of buddy service, at which point they graduate. In a typical fall semester, about 75% of our buddies are returning, leaving only 25% as openings for new children. As a result, the number of actual openings in any given semester for brand new children to get in off the waiting list is usually small.

**First preference** is given to children of adult literacy students enrolled in BoulderReads! as that is the group for whom the program was created.

**Second preference** is given to community children who are struggling with reading and writing, giving priority to the children who are struggling the most

**Beyond that**, we strive to create the most effective learning pair we can, based on the experience and skills of the big buddies available for that opening and the learning needs of the little buddies on the list.

The goal is for each little buddy to bond well with his or her big buddy and to have a highly successful experience with reading and writing.