

**BEST BUDDIES®**



**e-BUDDIES®**

# Fast Fact Sheet

FOR TEACHERS

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*"My students are developing  
their communication skills,  
their computer skills,  
developing friendships,  
and learning about  
other areas of our country."*

**Robert McMahon**  
Special Education Teacher  
Pennsylvania

Best Buddies International is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. Founded in 1989 by Anthony K. Shriver, Best Buddies has grown from one chapter on one college campus to more than 1,300 middle school, high school, and college campuses across the country and internationally. Best Buddies programs engage participants in each of the 50 United States. We have accredited international programs on six continents with additional country programs under active development.

e-Buddies is the newest of Best Buddies International's friendship programs. e-Buddies seeks to fulfill the mission of Best Buddies International by facilitating e-mail friendships between people with and without intellectual disabilities.

**Best Buddies International**  
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[www.ebuddies.org](http://www.ebuddies.org)

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## What is e-Buddies?

e-Buddies is an e-mail pen pal program that matches persons with an intellectual disability in one-to-one e-mail friendships with peer volunteers who do not have an intellectual disability.

## How does e-Buddies work?

Each student you sign up will be matched with a peer volunteer from elsewhere in the country. Once matched, they will be asked to exchange e-mails with their e-Buddy once a week for at least one year.

## How do I sign up my students for e-Buddies?

All e-Buddies participants sign up using the online application at [www.ebuddies.org](http://www.ebuddies.org). Simply click on the 'Join e-Buddies!' link and follow the prompts.

When signing up your students, we highly recommend our Group Application. This will allow you to quickly and easily sign up one or more participants, and it will allow you to manage and monitor your students' participation through the ebuddies.org website.

When an online application is received, our staff will process the application in ~1-3 weeks.

Once an application has been approved, we will immediately seek to match that participant with an e-Buddy. Participants will be notified of their match via e-mail.

## Why should my students become e-Buddies?

e-Buddies is a fun and safe way for your students to make a new friend, and can help develop skills in the following areas:

- Computer skills
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Communication skills
- Reading and writing skills
- Social skills
- Self-esteem

## Is e-Buddies safe?

- All e-mails between e-Buddies are sent via ebuddies.org. This allows participants to e-mail their e-Buddy without divulging their personal e-mail address.
- E-mail content is filtered, and all e-mail exchanges are archived and available for review.
- All e-Buddies applicants are screened before they can participate in e-Buddies. Each applicant must submit to a background check, and must also provide references to be contacted by our staff.
- Your students will never be matched with an e-Buddy who lives in the same state, and e-Buddies are not permitted to meet in-person.
- To protect your students' privacy, all application data is stored on a secure server. Best Buddies NEVER shares participant information with third parties.

## How much does e-Buddies cost?

e-Buddies is always 100% free of charge for all participants who have an intellectual disability.

## What is the commitment?

We ask all participants to e-mail their e-Buddies at least once a week for one year.

## What do we need to participate in e-Buddies at my school?

- Regular access to computers with Internet access.
- A unique e-mail address for each student you sign up.
- Time for each student to use e-mail at least once a week.

## How are matches made?

The e-Buddies staff makes matches based on similar age, gender, geography (matches are never made between participants in the same state), and shared interests.

## What if I have other questions?

For more information, or to sign up your students for e-Buddies, please visit our website:

[www.ebuddies.org](http://www.ebuddies.org)

e-Buddies is headquartered in the Washington, DC office of Best Buddies International:

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