

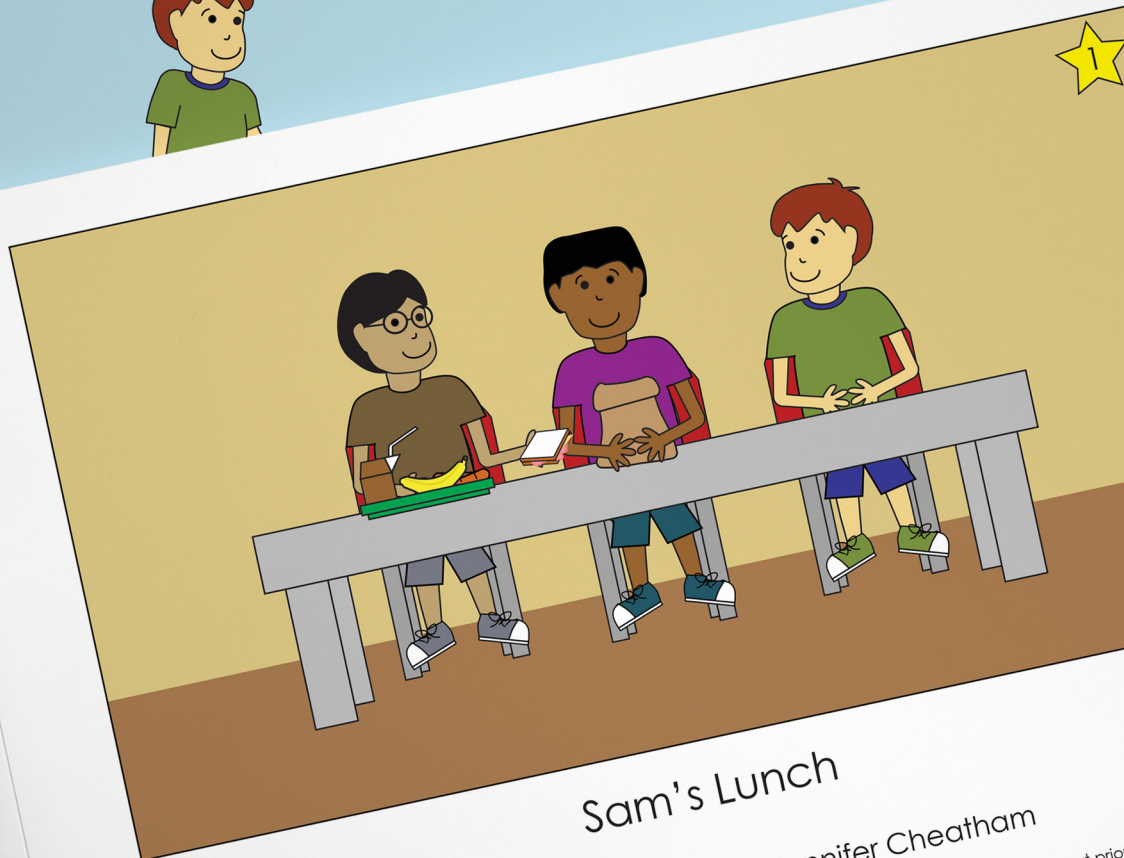
Friends on the Block Literacy Curriculum



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Sam's Lunch

Written and Illustrated by Jennifer Cheatham

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Friends

on the Block

LITERACY CURRICULUM

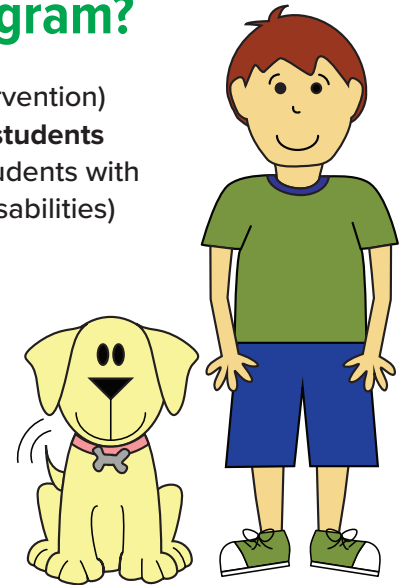
Components

- 60 student books, each with a Teacher's Guide (arranged in 14 levels)
- Over 100 games (arranged in 14 levels), including game pieces (pawns, die, bingo markers)
- Digital resources include all 60 books as ebooks, 17 of which are printable; printable versions of the games; printable Teacher's Guides; how-to videos

What is the Friends on the Block Literacy Program?

A comprehensive and intensive **early literacy program** (initial instruction or intervention) designed to be **customizable** and provide needed supports and practice so **all students** can attain early literacy skills, particularly those with **intensive needs** such as students with disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, learning disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities)

- Developed and piloted by researchers and teachers
- Includes 60 student reading books with carefully controlled text organized into 14 levels
- Each book has a detailed Teacher's Guide and materials
- Over 100 learning games that provide specific cumulative practice of key skills



Our goal is to help ensure that everyone, regardless of disability or circumstance, learns to read.

Who is it for?

It is appropriate for beginning as well as struggling readers, including readers with disabilities, even those with very intensive needs because it is highly customizable and includes the supports necessary for all students to succeed.

It is appropriate for any learner who has not yet developed strong foundational literacy skills (skills that are introduced and typically mastered in pre-kindergarten through first grade).

Who developed it?

Team of Researchers and Teachers

Curriculum Authors



DR. JILL ALLOR



DR. JENNIFER CHEATHAM



DR. STEPHANIE AL OTAIBA

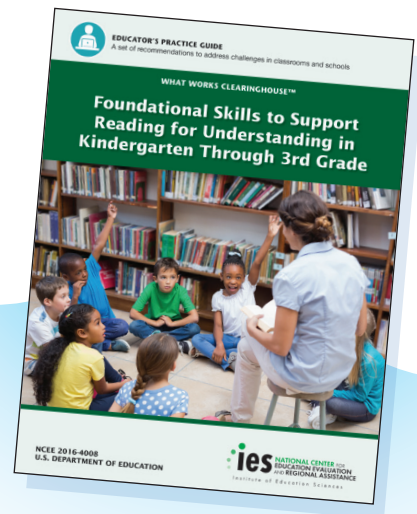
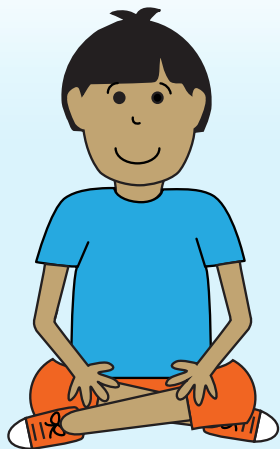
Acknowledgments

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What Research Supports the Friends on the Block Literacy Program?

Applies Existing Research

- Consistent with the “Science of Reading” and “Structured Literacy”¹
- Applies evidence-based recommendations from WWC Practice Guide on Foundational Skills, <http://whatworks.ed.gov>
- Follows principles of effective instruction:^{4,5}
 - Explicit instruction with step-by-step modeling and many examples
 - Systematic sequence organized from simple to complex skills and integrated across multiple skill strands (listening comprehension, phonemic awareness, decoding, etc.)
 - Scaffolding, temporary support, that is faded over time
 - Intensive repetition and cumulative review which is organized flexibly to easily accommodate different learner needs
 - Immediate corrective feedback that is clear and positive to ensure students practice skills correctly
 - Aligns with common evidence-based assessments and informal progress monitoring measures are included



Ongoing Process of Research and Innovation

- Developed and piloted program with new, cutting-edge features
- Research and development are ongoing



• FriendsOnTheBlock.com/research

- For all students, the results aggregated across levels indicated a statistically significant positive intervention effect³
- The median effect was 80% overall, supporting the hypothesized functional relation between participation in the intervention and improved student outcomes²
- Results indicate consistent moderate-to-strong positive effects for all students for both sight words and decodable words using conventional standards for evaluating effect size³

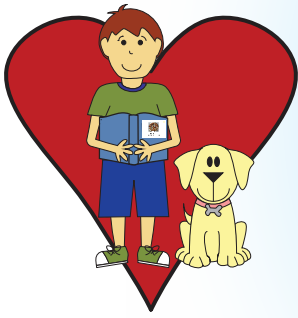
¹Allor, J. H., Gifford, D. B., Jones, F. G., Al Otaiba, S., Yovanoff, P., Ortiz, M. B., & Cheatham, J. P. (2018). The effects of a text-centered literacy curriculum for students with intellectual disability. *American Journal for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 123*, 474-494. doi:10.1352/1944-7558-123.5.474.

²Allor, J. H., Gifford, D. B., Jones, F. G., Al Otaiba, S., Yovanoff, P., Ortiz, M. B., & Cheatham, J. P. (2018). The effects of a text-centered literacy curriculum for students with intellectual disability. *American Journal for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 123*, 474-494. doi:10.1352/1944-7558-123.5.474.

³Allor, J. H., Yovanoff, P., Al Otaiba, S., Ortiz, M. B., & Conner, C. (2020). Evidence for a literacy intervention for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 55*, 290-302.

⁴Coyne, M. D., Kame'enui, E. J., & Carnine, D.W. (2011). *Effective teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learners*. Pearson.

⁵Coyne, M. D., Zipoli, R. P., & Ruby, M. F. (2006). Beginning reading instruction for students at risk for reading disabilities: What, How, and When. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 41*(3), 161-168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10534512060410030601>.



The books are the heart of the program.

What Makes the Friends on the Block Literacy Program Special?

Multicriteria Student Books

- Natural sounding sentences that reflect spoken language to facilitate comprehension
- Includes only words that have been taught or that can be decoded based on the skills taught
- Extensive repetition of high-frequency and decodable words
- Culturally diverse
- Meaningful stories in common settings
- Simple illustrations that enhance meaning and engagement, including nonfiction books with photographs

- Features enable students to begin reading in a book, with support, in the very first lesson

In Levels 1-3, students are learning letter sounds and phonemic awareness as they are preparing to sound out words. In these early levels, students learn a small number of Target “Read It” words that are common in both early spoken language and in early reading material. These words are irregular or temporarily irregular.

In Levels 4 and 5, students begin reading “Sound It Out” words. The Target Sound It Out words are also high-frequency words. The books include other Sound It Out words, too.

LEVEL 4 BOOK SAMPLE PAGES

A friend (teacher, tutor, family member, peer) reads **Helper Text** in gray boxes. Helper Text improves the story and supports comprehension and vocabulary.

The student reads **Student Text** in white.

Sam said, "I am sorry. Jazz won't hurt you. Are you mad at me?"

Are you mad?

No, I am not mad. I am scared.

Jazz can play. Do you want to play?

Yes, I like to play.

Yes, I want to play! I am happy. She is a good dog.

Sam asked the girl if she wanted to play with Jazz.

Sound It Out Target Words are decodable words that are also high-frequency words.

Read It Target Words are irregular or temporarily irregular high-frequency words.

A few **Picture Words** improve the story and support meaning, as well as basic vocabulary.

In Levels 6 through 8, students build automaticity as they practice words with short vowels and learn new irregular (or temporarily irregular) high-frequency words.

In Levels 9-14, students learn new letter patterns including long vowel patterns and other patterns.

The sequence of words and patterns was carefully crafted to facilitate both word recognition and meaning, guiding students through the phases of early reading development.

Supports Oral Language and Comprehension: All Target Words are common in early spoken language and print. Sentences are natural sounding as they are similar to syntax in spoken language. This supports comprehension and encourages prosody.

Extensive Repetition: Target Words from current level and earlier levels are repeated frequently to promote automaticity and fluency.

LEVEL 7 BOOK SAMPLE PAGES

Sound It Out Target Words are decodable words that are also high-frequency words. Other Sound It Out words are also included.

Pam asked, "Dan, did you get a big cut? If it is a big cut, we should help you take care of it."

Dan said, "No, I did not get a big cut. Look at it. It is just a little scratch."

Read It Target Words are irregular or temporarily irregular high-frequency words.

14

Soon Dan was feeling better and it was time to go home. They all walked together to Will and Dan's apartment building.

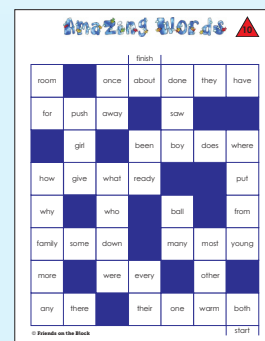
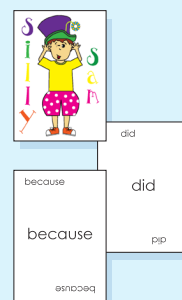
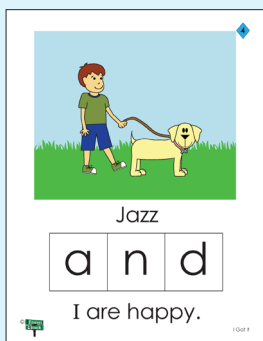
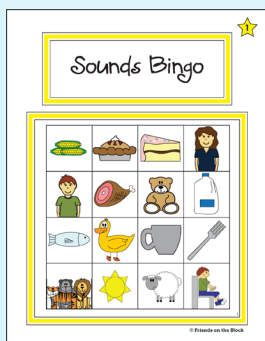
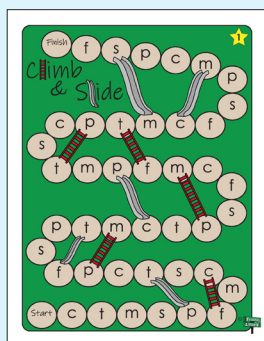
Helper Text read by a friend (teacher, tutor, family member, peer) continues but decreases in higher levels.

Books are longer in higher levels and chapter books begin in Level 7B.

Learning Games

- Important part of every lesson
- Provide targeted, fun, and motivating practice on important skills

- Organized into the same 14 levels as the student books
- Provide an easy way for teachers to customize lessons, as you can choose the games that target the skills your students need to practice the most



User-Friendly, Customizable Organization

- Scope and sequence
 - Focuses on key skills within all strands of word recognition and language
 - Facilitates integration of skills across strands and application of skills during book reading
 - With teacher support, students begin reading books in the first lesson
- Detailed teacher’s guides
- Lessons include effective strategies and predictable routines
- Instructional decisions
 - Pacing through the levels
 - Content of individual lessons
- Volunteers and paraprofessionals can easily provide additional practice sessions with book reading and games

Support For Varying Learner Needs

Our vision was to create a program that includes the supports necessary for all students to succeed, particularly those with intensive needs.

SUPPORTS BEHAVIOR, MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

“Do you know students who are frustrated, unmotivated or have difficulty paying attention?”

- The same characters appear in books throughout the series, increasing interest
- Games are an important part of every lesson and provide highly motivating practice on key skills
- Structured, predictable routines increase attention and engagement
- Teachers are provided with specific guidance to set clear expectations, model, and provide consistent support to increase success

SUPPORTS LEARNING AND REMEMBERING NEW SKILLS

“Do you know students who read words correctly one day and forget them the next day or even in the next sentence?”

- Books provide extensive repetition of new target words in each level and extensive cumulative review of previously learned target words
- Wide variety of games provided to support skill retention and automaticity
- Teacher’s Guides provide specific teacher guidance for introducing skills and providing corrective feedback and scaffolding

SUPPORTS LISTENING COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, VOCABULARY, AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE

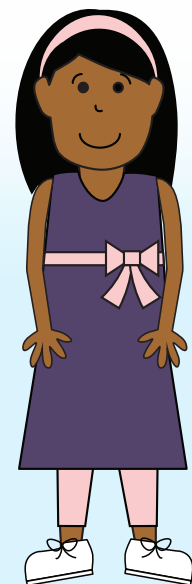
“Do you know students who are so focused on figuring out words that they don’t understand what they are reading?”

- Helper text and picture words make books more meaningful than typical decodable readers
- Listening and reading comprehension are included in every lesson
- The words in the books are common and likely to be familiar, or they are introduced in the helper text
- Games integrate word reading skills and meaning (e.g., I Got It game)
- Teacher’s Guides support comprehension development through dialogic reading style questions and comprehension strategies

SUPPORTS THE APPLICATION AND INTEGRATION OF SKILLS TO READING BOOKS

“Do you know students who read words correctly in a lesson, but then don’t recognize them when they see them in a book?”

- Skills are aligned throughout the lesson components; skills are introduced and reviewed in the warm-ups, applied to books during book reading, and practiced in games
- Teacher guidance ensures that students apply skills throughout the lesson



A Typical Lesson: LEVEL **4** BOOK SAMPLE *Sam and Jazz Take a Walk*

FLEXIBLE LENGTH-ABOUT 30 MINUTES

Part 1: WARM UP (5-8 MINUTES)

- Explicit modeling
- Brief practice

Sam and Jazz Take a Walk
Teacher's Guide

Target Read Words	Target Sound It Out Words
good	and
happy	mad
there	can
was	to

Warm-Up

Goal: Give most students the opportunity to say the sounds in a word.

1. Teacher: When I touch the letter(s), say the letter sound. Remember to say the sound for the letter as I touch it.

2. Teacher: Say the letter sound. (Touch the letter(s), holding your finger on the dot.)

3. Student: Say the sound.

4. Teacher: Say the sound.

5. Student: Say the sound.

6. Teacher: Say the sound.

7. Student: Say the sound.

8. Teacher: Say the sound.

9. Student: Say the sound.

Sam and Jazz Take a Walk

1. Teacher: When I touch the letter(s), say the letter sound. Remember to say the sound for the letter as I touch it.

2. Teacher: Say the letter sound. (Touch the letter(s), holding your finger on the dot.)

3. Student: Say the sound.

4. Teacher: Say the sound.

5. Student: Say the sound.

6. Teacher: Say the sound.

7. Student: Say the sound.

8. Teacher: Say the sound.

9. Student: Say the sound.

Warm-Up

Say the Letter-Sound

c a k j z

Sound It Out

and dad mad can at

Read It

good happy there was to

Lesson D Book: Read and Review

Have the students read the story straight through.

Copy onto the story grammar graphic organizer. Discuss the book's theme, make a copy of the graphic organizer and have students write their responses.

STORY GRAMMAR:

Character: Sam, Jazz

Setting: A grassy field

Problem: Sam and Jazz are having fun.

Resolution: Sam and Jazz are having fun.

Learning Game

Encourage them to use the recommended Learning Game. If you choose to use other games, make sure they are appropriate for the students' reading level and skills. You may also want to use your own to provide extra reinforcement of specific skills.

Lesson E Reinforcement and Assessment

Review this week's lessons and determine which skills your students need most. Select grammar rules to review that address these skills to practice those skills. See the Scope and Sequence, or if appropriate,

If you prefer, you may also choose to move on to the next book in the series. Remember that the decision to move on to the next book is based not on your students' reading level, but on their ability to use the skills you are teaching. The target sound it out words are intended to be used as a reinforcement of the skills you are teaching. All skills are reviewed weekly and gradually increase in difficulty.

Sam and Jazz Take a Walk

Written by Jill Allor, Francesca Jones, and Ashley Sandoval
Illustrated by Jennifer Cheatham

Part 2: BOOK READING (10-15 MINUTES OR MORE)

- Applying skills in text
- Engaging the students in conversations about the books and vocabulary
- Comprehension strategies

Part 3: LEARNING GAMES (5-10 MINUTES OR MORE)

- Intensive, fun practice
- Based on student needs

Sam and Jazz Take a Walk

Jazz

I are happy.

I Got It!

Objective: Sound out and read short vowel words with high letter patterns.

Materials: Get 10 letter cards. (Get letter cards with letters in boxes you can write on.)

Directions: We will take turns selecting letters. We will use what we know to cover that word that then if you can, pick up the card and say the sound. If you do not know a sound, I will help you. Then everyone will say the sound together, to be sure to hear carefully all of the time. Everyone who has the letter on their page will put a large marker on that letter. We will keep holding them until you have covered the word on your page. Let's play!

Students take turns. On each turn follow the steps below.

- The student picks up a card.
- The student says the sound, stretching continuous sounds for 2-3 seconds, and saying stop sounds quickly.
- All students say the sound, stretching continuous sounds for 2-3 seconds, and saying stop sounds quickly.
- A student who has that letter on their sentence card puts a large marker on the reading letter.

If all the letters on the student's sentence have been covered:

Now that you have covered all of your letters, let's figure out the mystery word and sentence. Sound it out!

Student says sound, stretching continuous sounds.

Student reads the sentence.

Student reads the sentence.

Decision to cover that word and read the sentence is the winner.

Playing until all students have covered their words and read their sentences.

Continue to participate by saying the sounds in order as part of step 3.

Feedback & Scaffolding

If a student does not respond correctly, follow the 1 We, You feedback procedure.

Saying Sounds

1. We, You feedback procedure.

2. I, We, You feedback procedure.

3. Say it with me. (Teacher and student say the sound together.)

4. You say it. (Student says the sound.)

5. You say it. (Student says the sound.)

6. You say it. (Student says the sound.)

7. You say it. (Student says the sound.)

8. You say it. (Student says the sound.)

9. You say it. (Student says the sound.)

10. You say it. (Student says the sound.)

Lessons can be easily customized by...

- Selecting the appropriate starting level with our simple placement test
- Deciding when to move from one level to the next
 - Students **do not** need to read all the books and complete all the lessons in each level
 - They move to the next level as soon as they know most of the target words in a level
 - Students with intensive needs will need to read more of the books and complete more of the lessons before moving to the next level; and other students may move through the levels more quickly
- Selecting games to practice specific skills based on student need

Our Goal

To help ensure that EVERYONE, regardless of disability or circumstance, learns to read.

To provide the support and practice needed for all students, even those with intensive needs, to develop basic early literacy skills.

- **Meaningful** – integrates word learning and comprehension; students read books with support in the very first lesson
- **Efficient and Effective**
- **Friendly** – fun and easy to use

Quotes from Customers

My daughter with Down syndrome is holding her own in a public school general education second grade classroom (no academic/resource support) largely due to her reading ability that started with learning to read using Friends on the Block starting before her 3rd birthday. She was one of the top readers entering kindergarten. She loves to read! Thank you Friends on the Block!!!

Parent & Substitute Teacher

My special needs daughter has received reading intervention through her school for several years, but she wasn't making adequate progress. The program that was being used with her was specifically tailored to children with dyslexia, but we recently determined that her IQ and achievement scores place her in the intellectual disability category. After much research we decided to switch her to the FOTB program and we have been thoroughly impressed! My daughter's reading confidence has increased as well as her enthusiasm for reading!!

The old program seemed monotonous for her-the stories had minimal illustrations (and weren't in color), the stories weren't easy to follow, the presentation of letter/sound combinations didn't seem appropriate for her, and there wasn't a heavy emphasis on sight words. FOTB has remedied all of these complaints and has brought joy to reading for my daughter. The program is mainly done at school, but we read books from the set nightly. On several occasions where she's had to quarantine during this crazy COVID mess, her special education teacher has sent the program materials home for us to keep on track. They are easy enough for a parent with no teaching background to implement and most importantly, my daughter doesn't dread working through this program; she enjoys it and is making strides in her reading skills! Thank you FOTB for creating a wonderful, engaging program!!

Parent/Family Member

My students LOVE the game Climb and Slide. I downloaded all the available levels during the September give-away and use the game during center time. Kudos to whoever created it. It is SO much fun.

General Education Teacher

My first student had lots of success with Friends On The Block; he quickly progressed and acquired so many skills further than just reading.

Preservice Teacher

I have been using FOTB as a supplemental resource for a dyslexic student during private tutoring. She has progressed from Level 3 to Level 8 on the Placement test and from Book Level 3 to Book Level 8B, in approximately 4 months. She is severely dyslexic, has speech issues, and is an ESL student. This series has helped build her reading skills, as well as her vocabulary and grammar in English. She enjoys the stories!

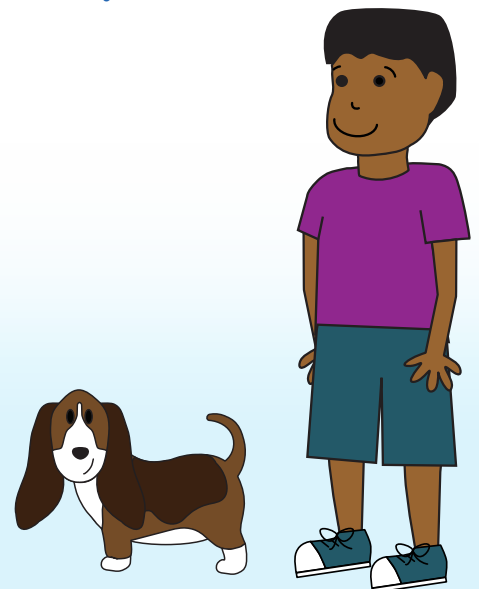
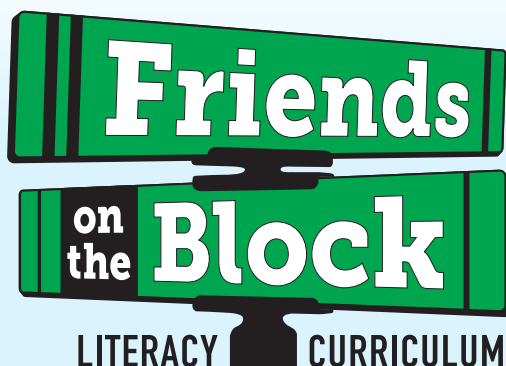
Dyslexia Therapist

I have had success with students increasing their vocabulary and utterance length during conversational exchange.

Speech and Language Pathologist

My students have made so much progress just since school started in August! Some of my students would have meltdowns when it came time for reading groups. Now those same children get excited for reading time every day. They love the stories especially the ones about the baby. (Sam Gets a Baby Sister and Babies Make Choices). I'm so amazed at how well this curriculum has worked for them. Now there are more special education teachers asking me about it! Thanks for working so hard to get this program up and running!! We love it!!

Special Education Teacher (students include those with intellectual disability)



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