

Buddy Bench and Buddy Squad Programs

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Community Need Statement

- Joe Hamilton Elementary School has adverse mental and social-emotional health for pre-k to fifth-grade students (e.g., coping skills, depression, anxiety, stigma, shyness, bullying, loneliness, and social isolation).
- My project's overall purpose was that the school needed positive mental and social-emotional support, new friendships, building social skills, and fostering students' community.

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to Joe Hamilton Elementary School
- Community Partners:**
- School Counselor, Lora Schultz
 - School Principal, Dr. Will Cushman

Method

- The Buddy Squad and Buddy Bench programs help reduce mental health by looking at the buddy bench to see if other kiddos need a friend.
- My overall goal is to have positive mental and social-emotional support among pre-k to fifth-grade students. My other goals for the project are having basic social skills and fostering the students' community.
- I incorporated Indigenous methods by disseminating the curriculum programs to the school counselor and principal only at Joe Hamilton Elementary School.
- I did eight weeks of curriculum classes for a third-grader class (e.g., friendship scavenger hunt, conflict role-playing, etc.). I created a curriculum binder and school report.
- I incorporate sustainability in my project by putting a curriculum binder together for the school counselor and having a monthly staff meeting at Joe Hamilton Elementary School.

Buddy Bench Picture



Deliverable/Results

- My deliverable project was turning in a curriculum binder of all activities.
- My second deliverable project was writing a school report on the overall outcomes of both programs and how much the private donor did to create the buddy bench.
- The outcomes of both programs are that the students learned about social-emotional skills (e.g., apologizing & conflict skills) and how to create new friends.
- The significant limitations are that the students were sick or the weather was superbad coming to Del Norte County.
- The following steps for the new school counselor are to have a buddy bench and buddy squad programs every year for the students. Moreover, the new school counselor would bring both programs to each future staff meetings.

Theoretical Issues/Literature

- Social skill instruction and school-wide positive behavior support effectively treat students with emotional and behavioral disorders (Griffin., 2017. Pg. 4).
- The concept of a Buddy Bench may help students who struggle with entering into play and those who want to help their peers feel included. The Buddy Bench in the playground symbolizes that the school's teachers, staff, and student body value social inclusion and do not want anybody to be left out (Groen., 2017. Pg. 7).
- Most children experience loneliness at school, resulting in a tendency to withdraw and avoid social interactions. Furthermore, children have admitted to being bullied, with those who are lonely and isolated more likely to be victimized. Loneliness, isolation, social anxiety, and shyness are common issues children face in school (Maureen., 2018. Pg. 9).

Credibility Statement

- I took on both programs because I have experienced adverse mental and social-emotional health (e.g., social isolation) during my childhood. I wanted programs that benefited students who faced similar experiences and created new friendships.
- Both programs benefited me because both programs increased my knowledge of creating two school curriculums.
- Moreover, I learned how to be creative in social-emotional learning activities for the student's needs and how to be relational with the kiddos.

References

- Griffin, Andrew A., et.al. 2017. "The Effects of a Buddy Bench on Elementary Students' Solitary Behavior during Recess." *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*.
- Groen, Sara K. 2017. "Buddy Bench: A Strategy to Increase Social Inclusion for Students with Special Needs". *Culminating Projects in Teacher Development*
- Maureen, Katherine C. 2018. "Benching Playground Loneliness: Exploring the Meanings of the Playground Buddy Bench." *I Journal of Elementary Education*.