TEACHER EDITION & CLASSROOM GUIDE

Little steps. Kind friends.

Ages 3 and up
Preschool core lessons with kindergarten to grade 2 extensions



Six ready-to-teach lessons
Read-aloud prompts
Student booklet guidance
Three classroom posters

A teaching companion to Julie & Bucky and the Big Dream Race
Book created by Micaela Suhr & Rory Campbell; illustrated by Rory Campbell.

Use alongside a copy of the picture book. This edition provides teaching notes and original activities; it does not reproduce the complete story.

Friendship • Kindness • Fair play
Winning & losing • Perseverance

Start here

What this unit offers

Six flexible lessons connect the story to everyday classroom choices. Each lesson has a learning goal, materials, preparation, a timed teaching sequence, discussion prompts, observable evidence of learning, and age adaptations. The student booklet has 16 activity pages followed by four coloring pages.

Your first 30 minutes

Read the book yourself. Choose one story moment to discuss. Print only the pages needed for the first lesson. Put out large crayons and familiar supports. Begin with the whole story for enjoyment; do not stop at every prompt on a first reading.

Choose a pace

Teach one lesson a week and revisit its language during play, or use the six lessons over two weeks. Suggested sessions are 20-25 minutes; shorten to 10-12 minutes for many 3-year-olds. Reading time is flexible and can be separate from the activity.

Keep the story and practice examples distinct

The dream race and Julie and Bucky's bond come from the book. Puppet conversations, block-building challenges, classroom invitations, and after-game scripts are new practice activities. Do not present them as scenes or quotations from the story.

Reproduction

Educators and families may print these companion pages for their own classrooms and homes. Keep the Julie & Bucky attribution. The original picture book remains a separate work. Share the resource link when another educator wants a copy.

Plan your six-lesson journey

1 A place for every friend

Friendship and belonging. Practice invitations and respectful answers. Student pages 4-5 and 14. Poster: Be a Kind Friend.

2 Kindness has many voices

Notice feelings, ask before helping, and respect boundaries. Student pages 3, 5-6. Poster: Be a Kind Friend.

3 Play fair, cheer together

Agree on rules, take turns, and encourage others. Student page 7. Poster: Play Fair. Care Always.

4 Big feelings, kind choices

Talk about winning, losing, disappointment, and supportive next steps. Student pages 8-9. Poster: Play Fair. Care Always.

5 Little steps, big dreams

Try a small challenge, ask for help, rest, and change a strategy. Student pages 10-12. Poster: Keep Trying!

6 The journey we share

Retell the story and choose a message to use in real life. Student pages 13-16. Optional coloring pages 17-20. All three posters.

Make room for every learner

Many ways to respond

Invite speech, pointing, drawing, gesture, acting, eye gaze, AAC, or adult dictation. A child may observe before participating. Keep prompts concrete, give processing time, and model choices without demanding a spoken answer.

Language and literacy

Use home-language feeling words and invitations when possible. Preview two or three words with actions and pictures. Adults read every student direction aloud; writing is optional. Older children can add labels, reasons, and story evidence.

Movement and sensory access

All games can be played seated or by directing a partner. Keep a quiet place available, avoid surprise loud sounds, and offer a predictable turn signal. Use the child's established support plan and ask what helps them participate.

Kindness includes choice

Never require hugs, touching, eye contact, smiling, sharing a personal story, or immediate forgiveness. Respecting no, stopping unsafe play, and asking a trusted adult for help are kind actions too.

Perseverance includes limits

Trying again does not mean ignoring pain, distress, fatigue, or an unsafe situation. Help the child stop, rest, seek support, or choose a different goal. Co-regulation comes before a discussion about choices.

Participation, not performance

Describe specific actions: You asked before helping. Avoid labels such as good loser, bad friend, brave child, or quitter. Do not grade a child's character or compare emotional control between children.

Read aloud: before and during

Before the first reading

Show the cover and title. Ask what children notice about Julie and Bucky. Explain that a dream can be something we imagine while asleep; a big dream can also mean something we hope to do. Invite predictions without correcting them yet.

First reading: enjoy the story

Read for pleasure with natural pauses. Invite children to notice pictures and repeated ideas. Let them listen in a comfortable position. Save most discussion for a rereading so the story keeps its rhythm.

Pause when Julie and Bucky are together

Ask: What do you notice about these two? What might make someone feel cared for? A child may point to a gesture in the illustration. Avoid assuming everyone feels safe in the same situation.

Pause at the starting line or with the other racers

Ask: What looks different about these racers? What might fair play look like here? Georgie's boast gives an opening to discuss how words affect others without labeling the character as wholly bad.

Pause when Julie feels unsure

Ask: What could help her take a next step? Could help, a rest, encouragement, or a different plan make a difference? Keep the question tied to the text and illustration in your copy.

Ages 3-4 version

Choose just one pause. Offer two concrete choices or act out one helpful phrase. Children do not need to explain an abstract moral to benefit from the activity.

Read aloud: the ending and meaning

Return to what the story actually says

Julie and Bucky do not come first; the book emphasizes the shared experience and their bond. No named race winner is needed for these lessons. Use your copy's wording and pictures instead of adding invented events.

Questions after reading

What happened at the beginning, during the race, and at the end? What did Julie have beside her? What might she remember about this experience? Which picture or words help you think that?

Connect gently to real life

Invite a low-pressure example: What could a puppet try if a tower fell? Children may use a made-up situation instead of revealing a personal disappointment. Never insist they tell the group about a difficult experience.

Offer a possible message, then listen

Say: I noticed that being together mattered. What did you notice? Readers may notice friendship, courage, joy, persistence, or another theme supported by the story. A theme is not a test with one required sentence.

Try a shared response

Say: We can try our best. Children may add: And care for each other. Or invite them to choose one poster and point to the part they want to remember.

Story-to-life bridge

Use student page 13 for a supported retelling. Use page 14 for appreciation, page 15 for family conversation, and page 16 for a specific effort or kind action the child chooses to celebrate.

The themes in child-sized words

Friendship

A friend listens, makes room, and cares. Ask: Would you like to join? Respect yes, no, and later. Friendship does not require being alike.

Kindness / being nice

Kindness is something we do: listen, ask, help, include, or give space. Being kind does not mean agreeing to every request or accepting hurtful behavior.

Friendly competition

We can enjoy a challenge, follow agreed rules, and care about the people playing. Wanting to win is okay; teasing, excluding, or changing rules secretly is not fair play.

Winning

It is okay to feel proud. Celebrate what you practiced and thank the people who played. Being first does not make a person more valuable.

Losing

Disappointment is a feeling we can support. A child may need time, quiet, or an adult before speaking kindly. Losing does not mean a child is bad at everything or less worthy of friendship.

Not giving up

A next step can be small. Ask for help, take a break, practice, or change the plan. We can stop unsafe tasks. We celebrate learning and strategies as well as finishing.

FRIENDSHIP AND BELONGING

1 A place for every friend

20 minutes | Student pages 4-5, 14

Learning goal

Children practice one way to invite someone to join and one way to respect a friend's answer.

Gather and prepare

The book, student pages 4-5, crayons, two large puppets or soft toys, a small play mat. Place two toys on the mat, leaving space for another. Plan a seated version of the same activity. Read the story once beforehand and mark a moment showing Julie and Bucky together.

0-3 minutes / Connect

Show Julie and Bucky together. Ask: What tells you these two care about each other? Accept pointing to the picture as an answer.

3-7 minutes / Model

Have one puppet ask, Can I join? The other says, There is room for you. Model a second invitation with No, thank you, and answer, Okay. You can join later.

7-14 minutes / Practice

In pairs or with an adult, choose an invitation: Would you like to build with me? Would you like to sit here? Children may speak, gesture, point to an invitation card, or observe.

14-18 minutes / Make

Use student page 4. Draw a welcoming play space and dictate or write an invitation. Use page 5 to notice specific helpful choices.

18-20 minutes / Reflect

Ask: How can we make room for someone today? Record one class idea and put it into action during play.

LESSON 1 FACILITATION NOTES

Teach, notice, adapt

Say it simply

A friend listens, makes room, and cares. We can invite someone to play. They can say yes, no, or later.

Discussion prompts

- What might someone need before they feel ready to join?
- What can we do if a friend says no?
- How do Julie and Bucky help each other feel less alone?

Notice learning

The child offers an invitation, identifies a welcoming action, or respects another person's choice with adult support.

For ages 3-4

For ages 3-4, use one puppet exchange and one picture. Keep the group session to 10-12 minutes and revisit the invitation during play.

For kindergarten to grade 2

For kindergarten to grade 2, ask children to explain why an invitation helps. Write two different ways to join a game and compare how each respects choice.

Extend into the day

Make a class friendship book. Each child contributes a drawing or dictated idea; include ways to be a friend that do not involve touch.

Student work and poster

Use student pages 4-5, 14. Display Be a Kind Friend. Read the poster aloud and connect its words to a specific classroom action.

KINDNESS, EMPATHY, AND BOUNDARIES

2 Kindness has many voices

20 minutes | Student pages 3, 5-6

Learning goal

Children identify a possible feeling and choose a helpful action without assuming everyone feels the same.

Gather and prepare

The book, student pages 3 and 6, crayons, two puppets, a familiar classroom object such as a large block. Choose a story illustration with expressive faces. Practice describing what is visible before guessing a feeling. Prepare a quiet participation choice.

0-4 minutes / Notice

Look at an illustration. Say, I notice the face and the body. I wonder how this character feels. Invite more than one possible feeling.

4-8 minutes / Model

A puppet's block falls. First guess: You must be happy. Then repair: I am not sure how you feel. Are you okay? Model asking before helping.

8-14 minutes / Choose

Offer three practice situations: someone is left out, someone wants quiet, someone drops a crayon. Children select help, listen, invite, or space. Explain that more than one kind choice can work.

14-18 minutes / Make

Use page 6 to draw a kind action and how to ask permission. Offer adult dictation. Use page 3 for a feelings check-in without requiring disclosure.

18-20 minutes / Reflect

Practice: Would you like help? and No, thank you. Explain that kind people can set boundaries.

LESSON 2 FACILITATION NOTES

Teach, notice, adapt

Say it simply

Being kind means caring about people. We can ask, Are you okay? We can help, listen, or give someone space.

Discussion prompts

- What do you notice in the picture?
- How could we check our guess about a feeling?
- What might kindness look like if someone wants to be alone?

Notice learning

The child names or points to a possible feeling and chooses a response that considers the other person's wishes.

For ages 3-4

Use two feeling words and one concrete situation. Let children point or use a familiar home-language word. An adult can model both parts of the exchange.

For kindergarten to grade 2

Ask children to distinguish an observation from a guess. Write a short repair statement after an unkind comment: That hurt. I will try different words.

Extend into the day

Create a kindness noticing jar with adult-scribed examples of real actions. Avoid ranking children or rewarding a performance of friendliness.

Student work and poster

Use student pages 3, 5-6. Display Be a Kind Friend. Read the poster aloud and connect its words to a specific classroom action.

FRIENDLY COMPETITION AND FAIR PLAY

3 Play fair, cheer together

25 minutes | Student pages 7

Learning goal

Children follow one agreed game rule, take turns with support, and use an encouraging phrase.

Gather and prepare

The book, student page 7, large blocks, a toy to mark turns, a clear tabletop or floor space. Set a cooperative goal: together, build a path of six large blocks. Keep the game predictable and free of elimination. Agree on a visible turn signal.

0-4 minutes / Connect

Recall the race's different characters. Discuss how people can enjoy a challenge in different ways. Wanting to do well is okay.

4-8 minutes / Agree

Choose two rules together: one block per turn; ask before changing someone else's part. Demonstrate each rule and how to request another turn.

8-15 minutes / Play

Build the six-block path together. Pass the turn marker; a child may choose a helper or pass. Model, Your turn. and I like how you tried that.

15-21 minutes / Rehearse

Try a short pretend race using two toys, without rushing children's bodies. Practice a start signal, the same finish point, and cheering both toys. Stop if excitement becomes uncomfortable.

21-25 minutes / Reflect

Use page 7. Ask: Which rule helped us? Which rule should we change before playing again? Agree on changes before restarting.

LESSON 3 FACILITATION NOTES

Teach, notice, adapt

Say it simply

We can try our best and care about others. Fair play means knowing the rules, taking turns, and keeping everyone safe.

Discussion prompts

- How will everyone know when it is their turn?
- What can we say when someone needs more time?
- Is a game still fun if we care about the people playing?

Notice learning

The child participates in a shared rule or turn routine, asks for support, or identifies a fair-play action.

For ages 3-4

Use two players and a single rule. Keep turns very short. Make the whole activity cooperative; no winner is needed.

For kindergarten to grade 2

Let children explain a rule's purpose. Compare an equal rule with an accommodation that gives a classmate meaningful access, such as a seated turn or partner assistance.

Extend into the day

If the class uses a matching game, start with only three or four pairs. Choose a shared goal of finding all pairs before adding competition.

Student work and poster

Use student pages 7. Display Play Fair. Care Always.. Read the poster aloud and connect its words to a specific classroom action.

WINNING, LOSING, AND DISAPPOINTMENT

4 Big feelings, kind choices

20 minutes | Student pages 8-9

Learning goal

Children identify disappointment as an acceptable feeling and rehearse one calming or help-seeking response after a game.

Gather and prepare

The book, student pages 8-9, two puppets, a quiet seat or familiar calm area. Use puppet practice, not a staged loss for a child. Offer an observer role and a way to stop. Review the class's existing calming supports.

0-4 minutes / Connect

Discuss the ending and what Julie values about the experience with Bucky. Do not invent a named race winner. Ask what matters besides first place.

4-8 minutes / Model

One puppet wins a pretend game. It says, That was fun. Thank you for playing. The other says, I feel disappointed. I need a minute. The adult stays nearby.

8-13 minutes / Support

Offer choices: sit with an adult, have space nearby, take a slow breath if comfortable, or get a drink with help. Never require a child to look happy or congratulate immediately.

13-17 minutes / Practice

Use page 8 to show possible feelings, then page 9 to choose a next step. Rehearse returning when ready: Can we play again later?

17-20 minutes / Reflect

Ask: What can you do when a game feels hard? End with an enjoyable shared activity, without ranking children.

LESSON 4 FACILITATION NOTES

Teach, notice, adapt

Say it simply

It is okay to feel glad, proud, sad, or disappointed. Winning or losing does not change how much we matter. We can have big feelings and use safe actions.

Discussion prompts

- Can someone feel proud and disappointed on the same day?
- What could a caring friend say?
- What might you need before you feel ready to play again?

Notice learning

The child identifies a feeling, accepts co-regulation, or selects a safe support. Needing adult help is part of learning.

For ages 3-4

Name one feeling and offer two concrete supports. Adults model the language while staying close. Keep the puppet scene brief.

For kindergarten to grade 2

Discuss the difference between celebrating effort and teasing someone. Write a two-line dialogue that respects both players' feelings.

Extend into the day

Make a class list of helpful after-game phrases. Include a quiet option: I am not ready to talk yet.

Student work and poster

Use student pages 8-9. Display Play Fair. Care Always.. Read the poster aloud and connect its words to a specific classroom action.

PERSEVERANCE AND NOT GIVING UP

5 Little steps, big dreams

25 minutes | Student pages 10-12

Learning goal

Children try a manageable challenge and identify a next step: help, rest, practice, or a different strategy.

Gather and prepare

The book, student pages 10-12, large blocks or cups, a stable surface, crayons. Choose a challenge just beyond what children do comfortably, such as a three-block bridge. Offer an easier starting point. Avoid small loose pieces for young children.

0-4 minutes / Connect

Revisit a moment when Julie feels unsure and continues with Bucky. Ask what support might make a difficult task feel possible.

4-8 minutes / Model

Build an unstable tower and let your own tower fall. Say, That did not work yet. I can use a wider bottom. Model asking a partner for help.

8-17 minutes / Explore

Children try a bridge or tower alone, with a partner, or by directing an adult. Describe strategies: You used a bigger block underneath. Do not compare speeds or products.

17-21 minutes / Plan

Use page 10 to choose help, break, or try another way. Use page 11 to draw a small goal and a first step. Page 12 records before and after if useful.

21-25 minutes / Reflect

Invite children to share a change they tried. It is fine if the task remains unfinished. Say, You learned something about your plan today.

LESSON 5 FACILITATION NOTES

Teach, notice, adapt

Say it simply

Not giving up can mean trying a little step, asking for help, taking a break, and coming back. We can change our plan.

Discussion prompts

- What is one small thing you could try next?
- Who could help?
- How will you know you need a rest or a different plan?

Notice learning

The child chooses a support, changes a strategy, returns after a break, or communicates a limit. Completion is not required.

For ages 3-4

Offer two large blocks and an adult partner. Practice one phrase: Help, please. Treat watching and choosing as participation.

For kindergarten to grade 2

Ask children to predict what a change might do, try it, and explain what happened. Record a strategy rather than a score.

Extend into the day

Revisit the same challenge another day. Notice learning over time. Explain that perseverance never means continuing something unsafe or ignoring pain.

Student work and poster

Use student pages 10-12. Display Keep Trying!. Read the poster aloud and connect its words to a specific classroom action.

STORY MEANING, FRIENDSHIP, AND REFLECTION

6 The journey we share

25 minutes | Student pages 13-16, 17-20

Learning goal

Children retell a beginning, middle, and ending with support and connect a story theme to one real-life choice.

Gather and prepare

The book, student pages 13-16, crayons, optional coloring pages 17-20, three spaces for a class story sequence. Mark three broad story moments: Julie with Bucky before the dream race, the race experience, and the ending with their bond intact. Use the wording and pictures in your copy.

0-5 minutes / Recall

Revisit the book's beginning, middle, and ending. Children point, act, dictate, or draw. Accept approximations; reread to check details.

5-11 minutes / Retell

Use page 13. Place three drawings in order. Ask what happened before and after, rather than asking for memorized wording.

11-17 minutes / Connect

Choose a poster. Children explain or show one way to use its message in class. Adults scribe the child's exact words when requested.

17-22 minutes / Appreciate

Use page 14 to make a thank-you drawing or note for someone who helps. Delivery and naming a person are optional; a pretend recipient is welcome.

22-25 minutes / Celebrate

Use page 16 to recognize a specific action or strategy. Send page 15 home as an invitation, not homework that families must complete.

LESSON 6 FACILITATION NOTES

Teach, notice, adapt

Say it simply

A story can help us think about our own choices. We can be a friend, play kindly, and keep learning, wherever we finish.

Discussion prompts

- What did Julie and Bucky share besides a race?
- Which part helped you think about being a friend?
- What will you try in our classroom tomorrow?

Notice learning

The child communicates a story event or a theme through words, pictures, movement, AAC, or supported choices.

For ages 3-4

Retell with two moments first, then add the middle. Use familiar props and let the adult carry most of the language.

For kindergarten to grade 2

Ask for a story detail that supports a proposed message. Explain that readers may notice more than one supported theme.

Extend into the day

Create a class display titled Little Steps, Kind Friends. Share only work and names for which the setting has permission.

Student work and poster

Use student pages 13-16, 17-20. Display All three posters. Read the poster aloud and connect its words to a specific classroom action.

Student booklet: response guidance

Pages 1-4: identity, dreams, feelings, invitations

Accept drawings, marks, pointing, gestures, dictated words, and invented examples. Page 3 has no required feeling; faces do not reveal everyone's emotions in the same way. Page 4 might show an open seat, an offered toy, an invitation, or space beside a friend.

Page 5: kind choices

Offering help after crayons spill and asking someone to join are helpful possibilities. Laughing at someone's mistake and grabbing a toy can hurt or ignore another person's wishes. Ask why; do not grade the child. A useful repair is asking, Can I have a turn when you are done?

Page 6: a kindness plan

A plan includes an action and an invitation or permission check. Giving space is an acceptable helpful action. Do not require children to promise a hug or give up a personally valued item.

Page 7: fair-play choices

Helpful choices: agree on rules before starting; wait or ask for a turn; encourage both players; ask an adult for help if play is unsafe. The child may invent another fair rule. Different supports can make participation fair.

Pages 8-9: winning, losing, and support

There is no correct facial expression after a game. Children may feel proud, disappointed, relieved, frustrated, or several feelings. Any safe, workable support can be chosen. Rejoining is an invitation, not an immediate requirement.

Student booklet: reflection guidance

Page 10: help, break, or another try

All three choices can support perseverance. Adults can combine them: get help, rest, and return. Do not mark taking a break as giving up.

Page 11: one small goal

Help the child choose a manageable first step, such as placing one block or asking one question. Accept a changed goal. The helper can be an adult, peer, or a familiar support tool.

Page 12: before and after

Look for a noticed change or strategy, not an impressive structure. A drawing of a fallen tower with a different plan is useful evidence of learning. An adult may record what the child said.

Page 13: story sequence

Possible broad sequence: Julie and her beloved Bucky; the dream race and the other racers; the ending valuing their bond and shared journey. Check details against the book. Encourage rereading rather than guessing a race winner.

Pages 14-16: appreciation, home, celebration

Thank-you notes can be addressed to a pretend friend. Family activities are invitations and need no returned proof. On the celebration page, describe an action or strategy rather than awarding a character label.

Pages 17-20: optional coloring

A Hug for Bucky; The Big Dream Race; Tea with Friends; You Did It! Let children choose colors and methods. Coloring is optional and is not evidence that a child has mastered a social skill.

Observe growth without grading feelings

Collect small, specific observations

Record the date, context, support offered, and what the child actually did or communicated. Example: During blocks, pointed to Help and chose a wider base after the adult modeled it. Avoid statements about a child's personality.

Four things to notice

1. Offers or responds to an invitation.
2. Notices a possible feeling or asks what someone needs.
3. Uses an agreed rule or turn routine.
4. Chooses a support or strategy during a challenge.

Describe the level of support

Use: observed independently; observed with a model or prompt; not yet observed in this setting. Not yet observed is not failure. A child may show a skill differently, with another adult, or on another day.

Use observations to plan

If waiting is hard, shorten turns. If the language is hard, add visual choices or familiar words. If competition causes distress, return to cooperative play. If a challenge is too difficult, make the first step smaller.

Optional adult reflection

Which children had meaningful choices? Did I make room for non-speaking responses? Did I support disappointment before asking for reflection? Did I praise a strategy rather than a result? What will I change next time?

Keep children's information private

Follow your setting's rules for notes, work samples, names, photographs, and display permission. These activities do not require sending children's personal information to the Julie & Bucky website.

A note to families

Dear families and caregivers,

Our class is exploring Julie & Bucky and the Big Dream Race. We are talking about friendship, kindness, playing fairly, winning and losing, and taking small steps when something feels hard.

Words we are practicing

Would you like to join?
Would you like help?
Your turn.
Thank you for playing.
I feel disappointed. I need a minute.
Help, please. I can try another way.

A few minutes together

Invite your child to choose one activity: make room for a toy at a pretend picnic, take turns adding blocks, or try a small challenge together. Ask, What could help us next? It is fine to use your home language, gestures, or pictures.

Feelings are welcome

Children do not need to smile after a disappointment. Stay nearby, name a possible feeling without insisting, and offer a familiar calming support. A break and adult help are part of learning.

You are invited, not assigned

The family page in the student booklet is optional. There is nothing to buy for these activities beyond materials you already have. You do not need to send photographs, private stories, or completed work back.

Keep the conversation going

Ask which poster message your child remembers. Notice one specific kind action or strategy: You asked before helping. You tried a wider block. Small everyday moments make good practice.

Teaching connections and sources

Literacy connections

Kindergarten: supported questions about story details (RL.K.1), retelling (RL.K.2), and identifying characters, settings, and events (RL.K.3). Grade 1: retelling with key details and considering a central message (RL.1.2); describing characters and events using story details (RL.1.3). These are suggested connections, not certification or endorsement.

Use developmentally appropriate expectations

The preschool activities focus on supported conversation, play, choice, and repeated practice. Do not apply kindergarten standards as a readiness test for 3-year-olds. Adapt expectations to each child and your local curriculum.

Primary story source

Julie & Bucky and the Big Dream Race, created by Micaela Suhr & Rory Campbell, illustrated by Rory Campbell. Story prompts should be checked against the edition used in class. This companion uses broad story moments rather than page numbers.

Professional reading

NAEYC, Building Social and Emotional Skills at Home: naeyc.org/our-work/families/building-social-emotional-skills-at-home. This resource discusses shared games, stories, and adult modeling as opportunities to practice social and emotional skills. The six lessons here are original companion activities.

Standards references

Common Core State Standards Initiative:
thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/K/
thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/1/
Consult your local standards and adaptations. Sources checked October 3, 2026.

Printing and access

Print student pages at actual size or fit within your printer's margins. Use black and white if preferred. Adults can read all directions aloud. The educator webpage provides selectable text and teaching prompts alongside printable downloads.