

Explore & Learn

Lessons and Activities

PK, TK, and VPK Instruction

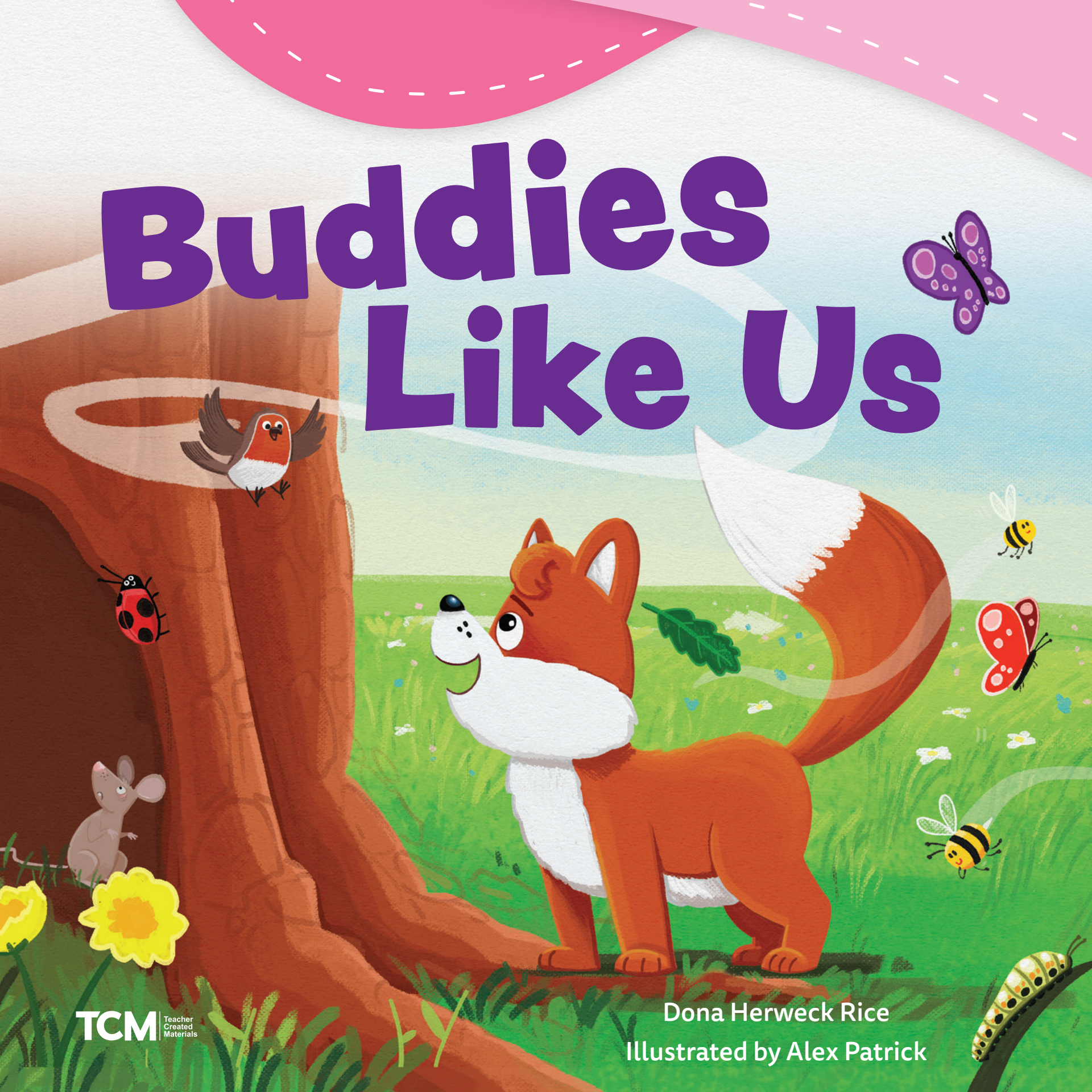
Who Cares for Me?


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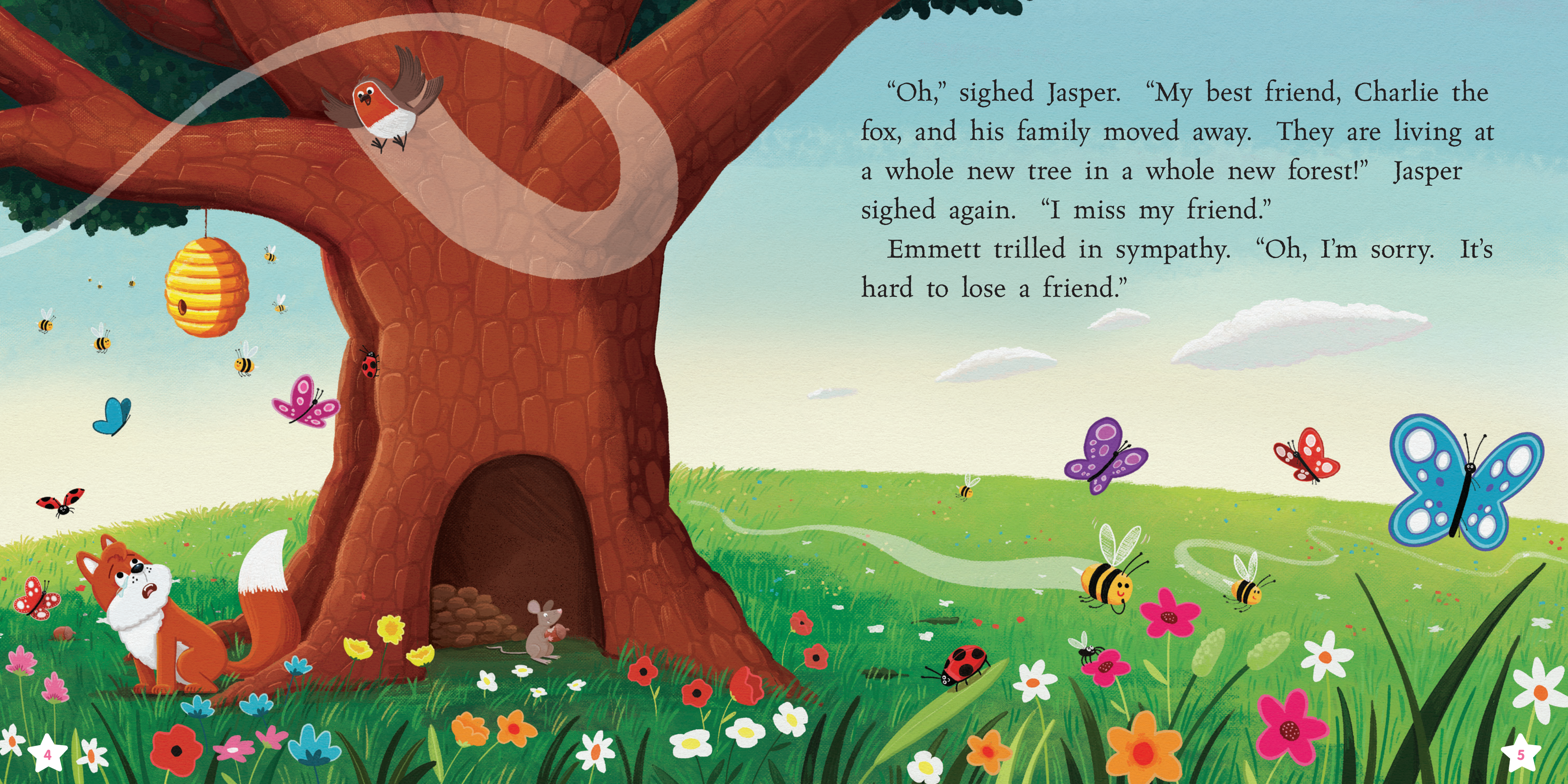
Buddies Like Us





“Say there, little fellow,” said Emmett the red robin, who sat high in the leafy branches of a scarlet oak tree. “Why so glum?”

Emmett was speaking to Jasper, a small red fox who sat slumped against the tree trunk below.



“Oh,” sighed Jasper. “My best friend, Charlie the fox, and his family moved away. They are living at a whole new tree in a whole new forest!” Jasper sighed again. “I miss my friend.”

Emmett trilled in sympathy. “Oh, I’m sorry. It’s hard to lose a friend.”

Jasper whimpered. “Did you ever lose a friend?” he asked, craning his neck to look up at Emmett.

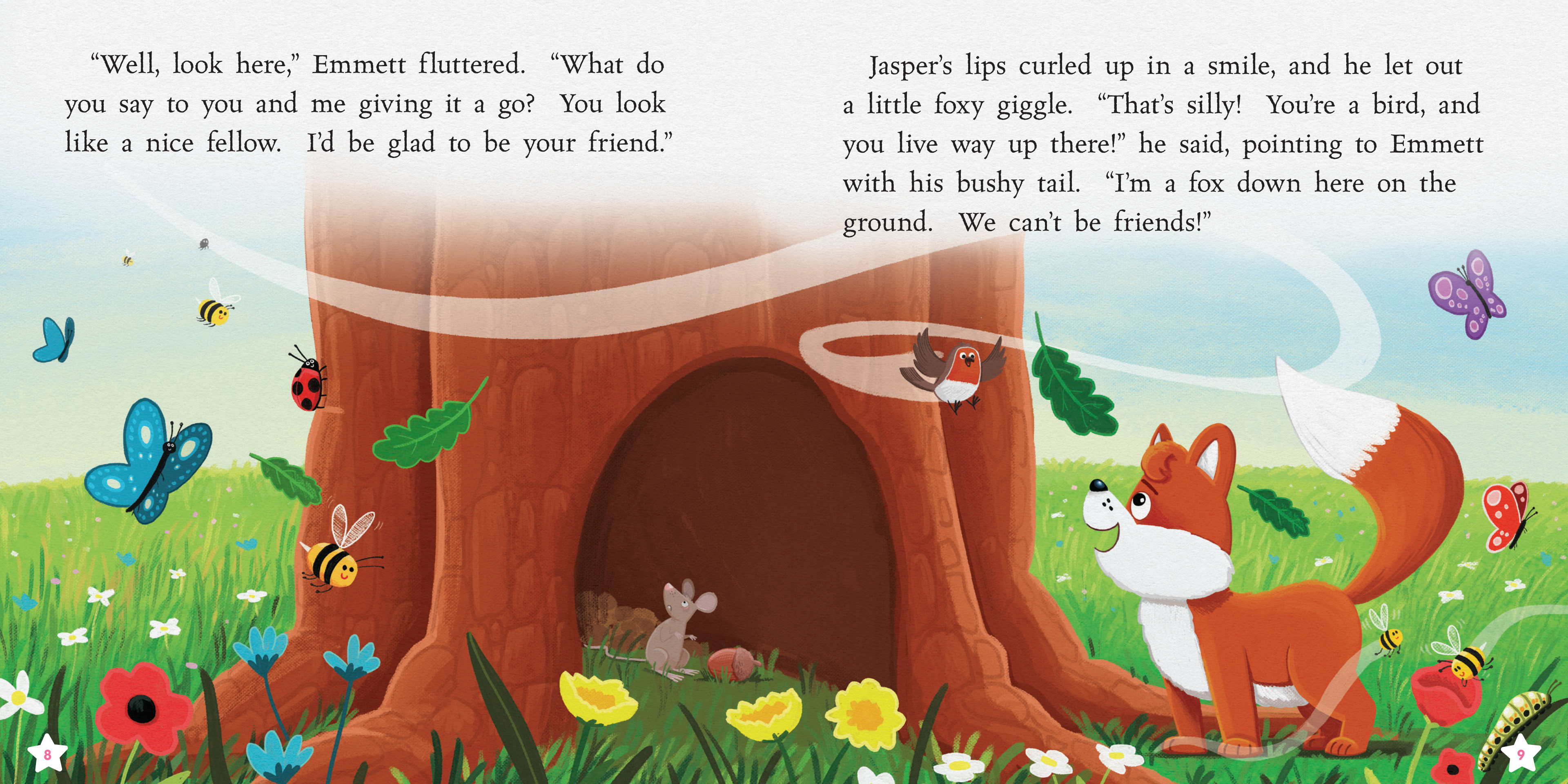
Emmett nodded briskly. “Indeed, I have. That happens sometimes, and it feels sad. But the good news is that the world is full of new friends to be made.”

“But how?” Jasper asked, wiping his tears. “Charlie was my very, very, very best friend. He is a fox, just like me, and we like all the same stuff. He is so funny, too!”



“Well, look here,” Emmett fluttered. “What do you say to you and me giving it a go? You look like a nice fellow. I’d be glad to be your friend.”

Jasper’s lips curled up in a smile, and he let out a little foxy giggle. “That’s silly! You’re a bird, and you live way up there!” he said, pointing to Emmett with his bushy tail. “I’m a fox down here on the ground. We can’t be friends!”



“Well, now, I don’t think that’s exactly so. Two smart fellows like you and me can figure it out, don’t you think?” Emmett asked with a beaky grin.

“Well...” Jasper began.

“Firstly, we have a lot in common, right? I mean, just look at us—we’re both known for our colorful fur or feathers. We both live in this fine forest. And we both love this beautiful old tree, eh?” said Emmet.

“Well, that’s true,” Jasper agreed.



“But what about the fact that you’re so high up, and I’m so low down?” Jasper wondered out loud. “Charlie was always down low like me.”

“Yes, well, that is a difference. But our differences can help us be very good friends to each other. Just think how I can sing you to sleep so nicely from up here in the tree while you’re down in your den,” Emmett advised.



“And just think how I can keep the prowling cats away from your tree, down here on the ground,” added Jasper with excitement.

“What a lovely thought!” said Emmett.



Emmett had another idea, too. “Do you like to play checkers?” Emmett asked.

“I do!” Jasper answered.

“Just look at this!” Emmett replied, dropping an acorn onto a checkerboard he scratched into the dirt.

“Wow! That’s neat!” Jasper added, pushing his own acorn into place with his paw.



“And there’s nothing to keep us from long strolls together, is there?” Emmett asked.

“Nothing at all,” Jasper answered, wagging his bushy tail.

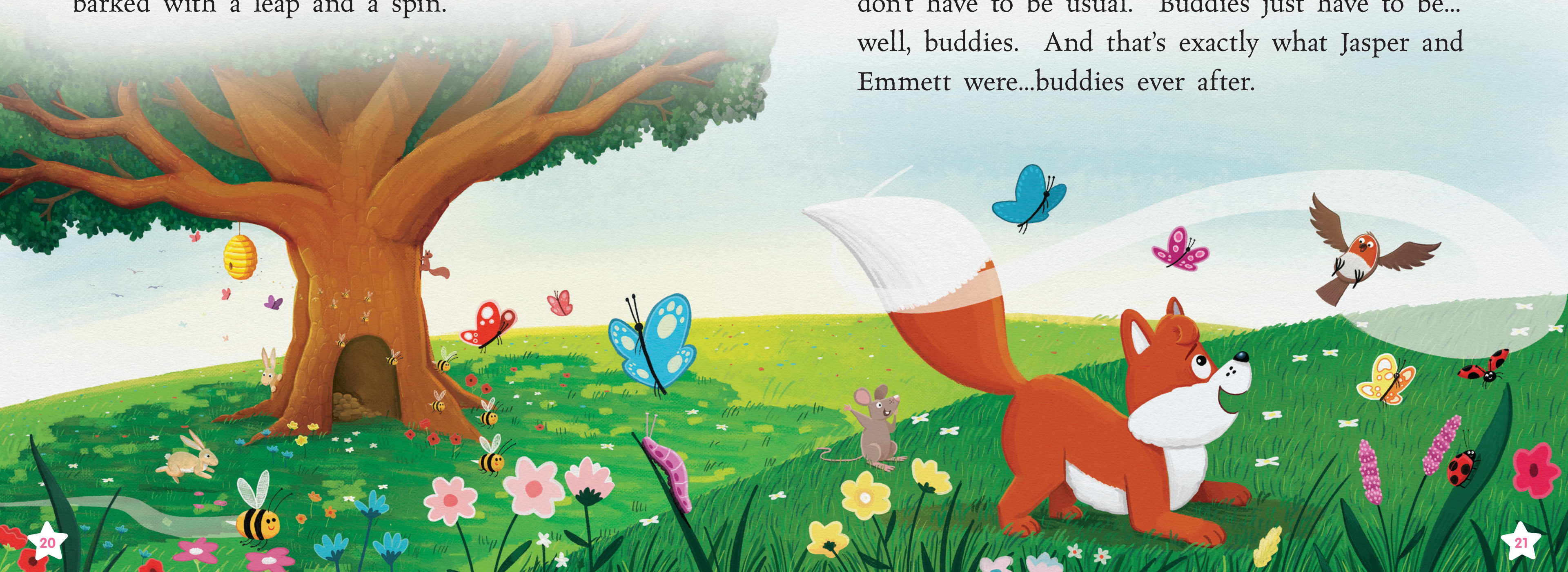


“We’ll be the best of friends,” Emmett said, flapping his wings and doing a little spin around the tree.

“There will be no other buddies like us!” Jasper barked with a leap and a spin.

“Friends like us play together and help each other out. We’ll be very good buddies,” Emmett sang out.

Good buddies are exactly what Jasper and Emmett became. They may have been unusual, but buddies don’t have to be usual. Buddies just have to be... well, buddies. And that’s exactly what Jasper and Emmett were...buddies ever after.



Notes for the Grown-ups

This book allows for a rich shared reading experience for children who are early and developing readers. The dialogue and images help new readers to tell the story, either as they read or as they are read to. What a valuable tool for building the confidence new readers need to embark on the adventures that await them while reading!

To extend this reading experience, do one or more of the following:

Share with one another stories about your own friends and friendships.

Discuss with each other what makes a good friend. Do people have to be the same or similar to be friends?

Suggest to the child that they draw a picture for a friend, showing what makes them such good buddies.

After reading, come back to the book again and again. Rereading is an excellent tool for building literacy skills.

Together, name all the other words you know for *friends*, such as *buddies*. Look up more words in a thesaurus or online.

Who Cares for Me?

Teacher's Guide



Day 8 Preparation and Materials

Morning Meeting

- **Materials:** *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1)

Literacy

- **Materials:** *Teach Letters and Sounds* routine (card 2); copy of *Buddies Like Us*

Literacy Explorations

- **Materials:** drawing paper
- **Preparation:** Ensure that each Literacy Exploration center is prepared.

Physical Development

- n/a

Phonological Awareness

- n/a

Mathematics

- **Materials:** counting manipulatives
- **Preparation:** Prepare a set of five counting manipulatives for each student.

Social Development

- **Materials:** *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16); “Feeling Angry” social story poster; crayons
- **Preparation:** Locate student-created social story books from Day 5.

Fine Motor Development

- **Materials:** *Sky Writing* routine (card 12); *Capital Y* (page 21 of *Student Activity Book*)

Science

- **Materials:** flashlights (one for each pair of students)
- **Preparation:** : Locate the *Shadow Diagram* from Day 6.

Creative Explorations

- **Materials:** dark-colored construction paper; variety of objects with interesting shapes (e.g., buttons, keys, pattern blocks, beads); rocks for paperweights
- **Preparation:** Locate an outdoor space where artwork can sit undisturbed in the sun for several hours.

Music and Movement

- **Materials:** “What Friends Are For” audio recording (friendsarefor.mp3) and lyrics (page 180)
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share the audio recording of the song.

Closing Circle

- **Materials:** *Closing Circle* routine (card 18)



If you have access to the digital manipulatives, you may choose to use the digital counters in place of the noted materials during the Mathematics lesson.

Morning Meeting

10-15
minutes

whole group

1. Follow the *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1).
2. Draw an oval on the board or chart paper. Have students identify the shape. Say, “This is my friend Oval-er (like Oliver). Oval-er wants to show you the many different feelings he has.”
3. Inside of the oval, draw two eyes and a nose. Then, draw eyebrows pointing downward in the middle and a frown to show an angry face. Show students, and say, “What is Oval-er feeling?” Provide time for students to respond. (*mad* or *angry*) Ask students how they know Oval-er is angry. Provide time for students to respond, and say, “I can tell that Oval-er is angry because his eyebrows are pointing down in the middle and his mouth is frowning.” Have students show an angry face.
4. Go through a few more feelings, drawing different expressions on Oval-er, such as the following:
 - happy—draw a smile and eyebrows that are rainbow-shaped
 - worried—draw a mouth that is a slanted line and eyebrows that are pointing down on the outsides
 - sleepy—draw closed eyes and a neutral mouth



Free Play

Free Play is a fundamental part of the *Explore & Learn* day. See page 103 for free play ideas related to this unit.



Literacy

20-30
minutes

whole group

partner work

Alphabet Knowledge Warm-Up

1. Gather students together, and follow the *Teach Letters and Sounds* routine (card 2) to teach the letter of the day. Choose which letter to teach based on your scope and sequence. (See page 39 in the *Management Guide* for more information.)

Whole-Group Lesson

2. Display *Buddies Like Us*, and remind students that the characters, Jasper and Emmet, become unexpected buddies. Read the book aloud to students.
3. Say, “Friends have things in common and things that are different about them. Friends can learn from each other’s differences and enjoy the things they both like together.”
4. Have partners discuss their likes and dislikes. Provide topics for students to discuss, such as what they like to do at the playground, favorite foods, and favorite games. Challenge partners to find something they have in common and something that is different.

Literacy Explorations

15-20
minutes

small groups

centers

Meet with one group to deliver Small-Group Lesson 3 (page 106), while the rest of the students engage in self-chosen centers. For more information about independent learning centers, see page 107.

Physical Development



1. Gather students together, and say, “We are going to play a game called Red Light, Green Light. When I say *green light*, you can walk toward me. When I say *red light*, you must stop.”
2. Begin the activity slowly. Remind students to walk, not run, and be careful with their peers nearby to help everyone stay safe.
3. Say, “Now, you are going to be playing the game with partners!” Have pairs of students link arms and work together to move forward and stop when prompted.

Extension Idea

Have one student close their eyes, with the other serving as a guide. Hold up red and green sheets of paper to signal to the guiding partner when to stop and go. Have partners switch roles and continue the activity.



Phonological Awareness



1. Gather students together, and say, “Alliteration is when words start with the same sound. *Tim and Tom play tag together*. In this sentence, most of the words start with the sound /t/. Repeat after me. *Tim and Tom play tag together.*”
2. Say each sentence below, emphasizing the beginning sound of each word, and have students repeat after you. Chant with rhythm.

Listen to this silly sentence with alliteration.

You will hear the sound repeat:

/t/, /t/, /t/!

Tim and Tom play tag together.

Repeat after me!

Tim and Tom play tag together.

/t/, /t/, /t/!

3. Repeat step 2, using more sentences.
 - Fun friends feel fine.
 - Pals play at the playground.
 - Little leopards laugh at lights.
 - Kangaroos keep kind kids.

★ ★ Teacher-Choice Read-Aloud

Per the pacing plan suggestions on page 38 of the *Management Guide*, after the phonological awareness activity is a good time in the *Explore & Learn* day for a teacher-choice read-aloud.



Mathematics



Whole-Group Lesson

1. Gather students together, and write the number 0 where students can see. Have them identify the number and show zero with their fingers. Hold up zero fingers on your hand, and say, “This is zero. Zero also means none.”
2. Hold up a few fingers on one hand, and have students identify how many. Hold up zero fingers on the other hand, and say, “I have ____ fingers on one hand and zero fingers on the other hand. How many fingers am I holding up altogether?” Have students respond. Repeat several times with different quantities to have students practice adding zero.

Guided Practice

3. Have students move to their workspaces and use manipulatives to solve the following number stories involving zero. Have students share what they should do each time the number zero appears in the number story.
 - I had two oranges. I went to the store to get more, but they didn’t have any. So, I bought zero oranges. How many oranges do I have now?
 - I had zero flowers at home, so I went to my garden and picked five flowers. How many flowers do I have now?
 - I saw four birds sitting in a tree. Zero birds flew away. How many birds are left?

Social Development



1. Gather students together, and display the front of the “Feeling Angry” social story poster. Reread, “They are in the middle of building—not just a *sandcastle* but a whole *sand village*!” Have students close their eyes and picture what a sand village looks like.
2. Note that illustrators think of details that will make their illustrations interesting to look at. Say, “A sand village sounds so awesome! That would be a great detail to add to the illustrations for this story! You might have some interesting things you could add to your illustrations.” Distribute social stories, and allow time for students to look at and think about their illustrations. Have students make plans for details they could add to their drawings and share their plans with partners.
3. Have students move to their workspaces and continue to work on their social stories. Encourage students to add more details to their pictures. Support the remaining students in completing step 5 of the *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16) by writing their stories.

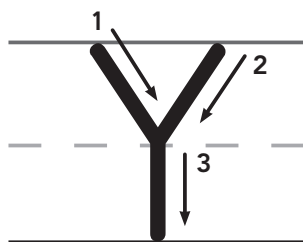
Fine Motor Development

10-15
minutes

independent work



whole group



1. Have students move to their workspaces, and say, “Today, we will be writing capital Y.” Write Y in clear view of students.
2. Ask, “How many diagonal lines does Y have?” (two) Ask, “How many straight lines does Y have?” (one)
3. Follow the *Sky Writing* routine (card 12) to make Y. As you model making the lines in the air, say, “Slant, slant, down.” Have students practice.
4. Model writing Y in clear view of students. As you make the movements with your writing tool, say, “Slant, slant, down.”
5. Have students complete *Capital Y* (page 21 of *Student Activity Book*). As students work, monitor for proper pencil grasp, pressure, and paper positioning, correcting as needed.

Science

15-25
minutes

whole group



partner work

1. Gather students together. Display the *Shadow Diagram* from Day 6, and ask, “How are shadows created?” Have students turn and talk to partners to share their ideas. Select several students to share with the group. Paraphrase student ideas as needed.
2. Explain, “You and a partner will use a flashlight to create shadows. You will need to work together and take turns for your shadows to be successful.” Turn off the lights. With a student volunteer, demonstrate the two jobs of holding the flashlight and creating the shadow. Tell students that they will have many opportunities to do both jobs.
3. Provide time for partners to experiment with creating shadows. Encourage them to create shadows with their hands and objects around the classroom. Every few minutes, signal partners to switch roles.

Creative Explorations

15-25
minutes

independent work



whole group

To account for weather conditions, this lesson can be switched with the Day 9 or Day 10 lessons.

1. Gather students together outdoors. Say, “We have been using the sun to make shadows. Today, we will use the sun to create art!” Explain that students will create designs. The objects they use will block the sun from that part of the paper. The rest of the paper that is exposed to the sun will become lighter.
2. Distribute a piece of construction paper to each student, and have them place it on the ground. Have students choose the materials they would like to use to create a design then arrange the objects on their papers.
3. Have students place rocks on the edges of their papers as paperweights. Leave the designs in the sun for several hours.
4. Have students remove the objects to reveal their designs.

Language Development Support

After students reveal their designs, have them share with peers. Have students explain the materials they used to create their shadow art.



Music and Movement

10-15
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together, and review the song “What Friends Are For.”
2. Ask, “What do your friends do for you?” Record a few student responses on the board or chart paper.
3. Plug the ideas into the blank verses. Sing the new verses aloud as a group.
Our friends always help us ____, ____, ____.
Our friends always help us ____.
That’s what friends are for.

Closing Circle

5-10
minutes

whole group

1. Follow the *Closing Circle* routine (card 18).
2. If time allows, choose an extension activity from the routine card.

Card 1

Morning Meeting

Objective: Students will build community through safe, predictable routines.

Materials: Daily Picture Schedule Cards ([schedulecards.pdf](#); *optional*)

Gather and Greet

1. Signal to the whole group that it is time to gather for the morning meeting. You may choose to use a song as a transition.
2. Gather students together in a circle. Remind students about personal space and the importance of keeping their hands and feet to themselves.
3. Have students greet each other. You may choose to do a whole-class greeting with a song or have students pass one of the following greetings around the circle by greeting the peers next to them:
 - high five
 - elbow bump
 - fist bump
 - wave

Our Day

4. Share the plan for the day. This can be done by reviewing the *Daily Picture Schedule Cards* together or through a morning message—a short note addressed to the class that includes one or two main events that will take place during the day. The daily learning objectives are included in the *Teacher's Guide* for your easy reference.

Theme

5. Have students engage with the theme, color, shape, and/or phrase of the week. Ideas are included in the daily lesson plans in the *Teacher's Guide*.

Card 2

Teach Letters and Sounds

Objective: Students will learn the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent to support reading readiness and emergent writing skills.

Materials: *Letter Cards* ([lettercards.pdf](#))

Preparation: Choose which letters to teach based on your scope and sequence. (See page 39 in the *Management Guide* for more information.) Prepare to share the selected *Letter Cards*.

Name It

1. Display the selected *Letter Card*, and say, "This is the letter _____. This is a capital _____ (*point to the capital letter*), and this is a lowercase _____ (*point to the lowercase letter*)."
2. Point to the *Letter Card*, and say, "What letter is this?" (*Students respond with the letter name.*)

Say It

3. Say the sound the letter represents, and discuss how the sound is formed. Have students repeat the sound several times.

Write It

4. With your finger, trace the capital letter on the card. Narrate your movements, describing the starting point and the types of lines you are forming.
5. Ask students to hold up their pointer fingers and form the lines of the uppercase letter on flat surfaces. Have students repeat the sound the letter makes while they are forming the letter.
6. Repeat steps 4–5 with the formation of the lowercase letter.



laugh



**a sound people make when
they think something is funny**

laugh

Related Words

chuckle

giggle

squeal

Sentence

I **laugh** when my friend makes a silly face.

Engage

- ★ Which of your friends has the best laugh? What does it sound like?
- ★ How do you feel when you laugh?
- ★ What is something that makes you laugh?
- ★ Look at the picture. Why do you think the people are laughing?



Feeling Angry

Cam E. Chameleon is enjoying the sun and the sandbox with her good friend Ray. They are in the middle of building—not just a *sandcastle* but a whole *sand village*! They both hear the bell ring for them to come in, but they have to finish their work. Cam starts working faster and faster to get the last sand houses just right. Ray stands up, ready to join the class, but Cam is not ready.

Cam’s teacher comes over to see why Cam is not coming. She kneels next to Cam and tells her it is time to say goodbye to her creation. Cam’s fists clench the sand. When Cam gets angry, her jaw tightens, her body gets warm, and she balls her hands into fists. Cam yells, “I don’t want to say goodbye! I want to finish my work!”

Ms. Lee takes a deep breath and reassures Cam that it is okay to be angry. She says, “It is hard to leave when you are in the middle of working on something you like. At playtime, though, we all stay safe by listening and following directions. Right now, the class is going inside, and you need to come in with us to stay safe.”

Ms. Lee suggests that Cam uses something called “self-talk.” She explains that self-talk is encouraging language that Cam can say in her head to help her make good choices in hard situations. Ms. Lee suggests, “It’s hard to leave, but I know I will be back this afternoon to keep building.”

Cam thinks, *It’s hard to leave, but I know I will be back this afternoon to finish.* After thinking this, Cam finds that walking away is easier. She takes Ms. Lee’s hand and joins her class.

Ms. Lee celebrates Cam for trying self-talk. Cam sits next to Ray in the classroom, and as she gets out her favorite snack, she can see that Ray doesn’t have a snack he likes. She sees his jaw clenching, his fists tightening, and his cheeks getting red. She takes a deep breath and tells Ray all about how to use self-talk to make it through his hard situation.

Key Words

angry
choices
clenching
fists
ready
safe
self-talk
tightening



Listen



tcmpub.digital/el_story6

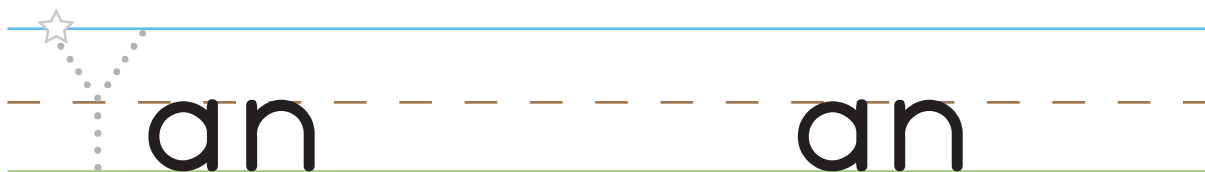
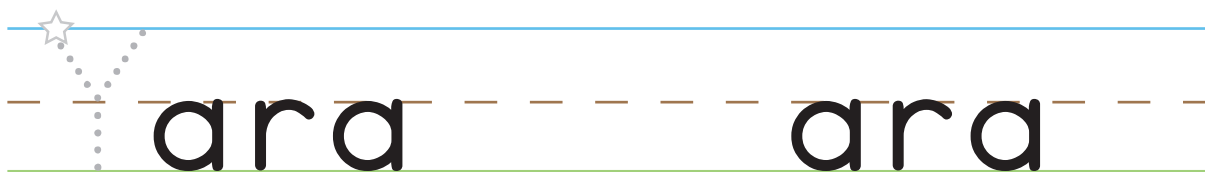
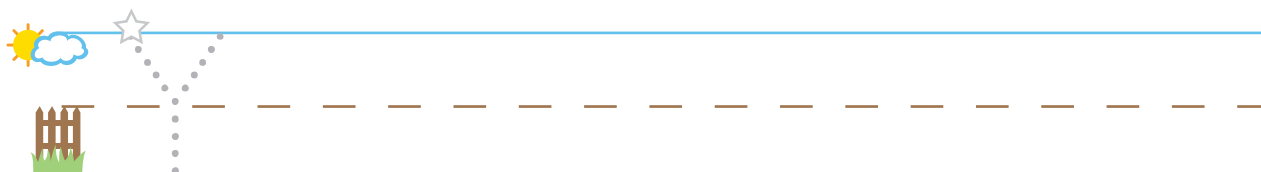
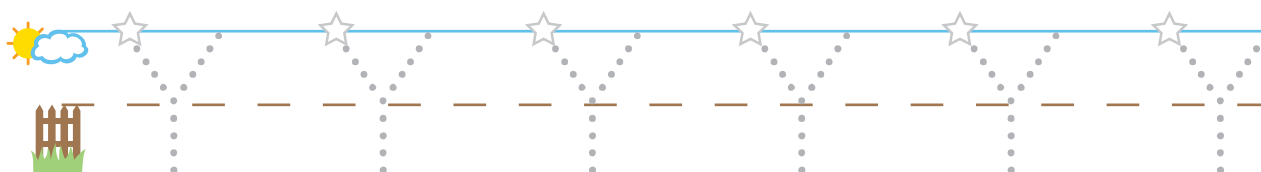
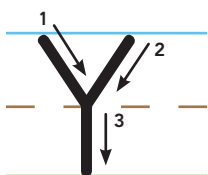
Shadow Diagram

Make a copy of this image for the Days 6–8 lessons..



Name: _____

Capital Y



Adults, read this aloud: Start at each star. Trace each letter. Then, write your own letters.

Social Development and Executive Functioning

Social development and executive functioning include skills and competencies that are essential to getting along with others and managing cognitive processes to regulate behavior. Developing these skills is essential in early childhood as young learners set the foundation for healthy identity development and strong interpersonal relationships.

There are six components that will be assessed in this area:

- **Building Relationships**—Building relationships is the ability to establish and maintain relationships with peers and adults. This involves communicating with others, working together to achieve shared goals, and navigating social situations that may involve differences or conflicts.
- **Social Awareness**—Social awareness is the capacity of early learners to become aware of the needs, desires, and perspectives of others. This involves feeling empathy and showing care for others. Students use cues and situational context to learn that other people's perspectives may be different from their own. Social awareness also involves understanding and navigating social norms.
- **Decision-Making**—Decision-making involves the processes through which prekindergarten students gather information and make choices that balance their own needs and rights with others' needs and rights. When making personal choices and engaging in social interactions, students consider different ideas and solutions. They also reflect on and evaluate the consequences of their decision-making.
- **Working Memory**—Working memory is the capacity to hold information in mind for a short amount of time. Young learners draw on working memory to process information and complete tasks. This includes focusing when gathering information, organizing thoughts and information, following multistep directions, and problem-solving.
- **Attention**—Attention involves the ability to take in information from the environment and select and focus on one or more things. Students at this level are developing their abilities to sustain attention for increasing lengths of time. Attention involves focusing sufficiently to understand information or perform a task and ignore distractions.
- **Self-Control**—Self-control is the ability to manage one's own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions. This includes regulating emotions in various social situations, delaying gratification, and controlling impulses to make thoughtful and intentional choices.



Social Development and Executive Functioning Checklist

Date: _____

Teacher Directions: During each two-week unit, use this checklist to indicate each child's level based on your observations. Use the following symbols, and include notes about their work when possible.



Advancing



Meeting



Emerging



Beginning

Student Name	Building Relationships	Social Awareness	Decision-Making	Working Memory	Attention	Self-Control

Social Development and Executive Functioning Rubric

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use the *Social Development and Executive Functioning Checklist* to summarize these skills throughout this unit. Based on your notes and annotations on the checklist, determine at which level the student is working for each criterion. Circle or highlight the rating for each component.

	Advancing	Meeting	Emerging	Beginning
Building Relationships	Builds, sustains, and expands relationships.	Builds and sustains relationships.	Starting to build and sustain relationships.	Starting to build relationships with support.
Social Awareness	Considers the needs, desires, and perspectives of others when making choices.	Is aware of the needs, desires, and perspectives of others.	Starting to be aware of the needs and desires of others.	Starting to be aware of the needs of others with support.
Decision-Making	Considers multiple ideas when making choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Makes choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Starting to make choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Starting to make choices with support.
Working Memory	Recalls information to follow multi-step directions and solve problems.	Recalls information to follow multi-step directions.	Starting to recall information to follow directions.	Starting to recall information for short amounts of time with support.
Attention	Focuses and sustains attention for increasing periods of time.	Focuses and sustains attention.	Starting to focus and sustain attention.	Starting to focus on one thing with support.
Self-Control	Manages own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions in various social situations.	Manages own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions in routine situations.	Starting to manage own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions.	Starting to manage own feelings and thoughts with support.