ORILLIA

City of Orillia

The Buddy Program

Welcome to the Buddy Program

Having fun, making friends, and trying new things are important for everyone! Recreation and leisure activities help people of all abilities enjoy life, learn new skills, and connect with others in a welcoming and supportive way.

If a participant requires extra support to fully enjoy a City of Orillia program, they may be eligible for the Buddy Program. Through this program, a dedicated staff member, referred to as a "Buddy", will assist the participant for the duration of the program.

If a participant already has an external support person (e.g., family member, personal support worker) and wish for them to attend, they are welcome to do so. Please see the section on "Requesting a Buddy" for more information.

A participant may require a Buddy if they:

- Have physical, visual, hearing, developmental, or intellectual challenges.
- Require extra support to participate in group activities.
- Receive support at school or from a community agency.
- Have anxiety or social challenges and feel overwhelmed in new environments.
- Need support with staying engaged, following instructors, or managing emotions in a group setting,
- Has never attend a camp or structured program before and need extra help understanding expectations and participating fully.

Buddy Training and Support

Our Buddies are trained to create a safe, fun, and supportive environment for all participants. Buddies are 16 years or older and will complete the following training:

First Aid Certification:
Current Standard First Aid with CPR-C.

Criminal Record Check:
Includes Vulnerable Sector Screening.

High Five Certification:
Focuses on the five key principles for ensuring positive recreation and leisure experiences.

Behavior Management Training (Camps Only):
Covers child development, behavior strategies, and managing challenging behaviors to keep programs safe and inclusive.

Program-Specific Skills:
Buddies are trained to encourage friendships, support participation, and manage emergency situations.

Basic Behavior Management:
Buddies are equipped with redirection techniques and a clear understanding of the "hands-off" policy.

If a participant requires significant physical support or specialized interventions, an external support person may be required to attend alongside them.

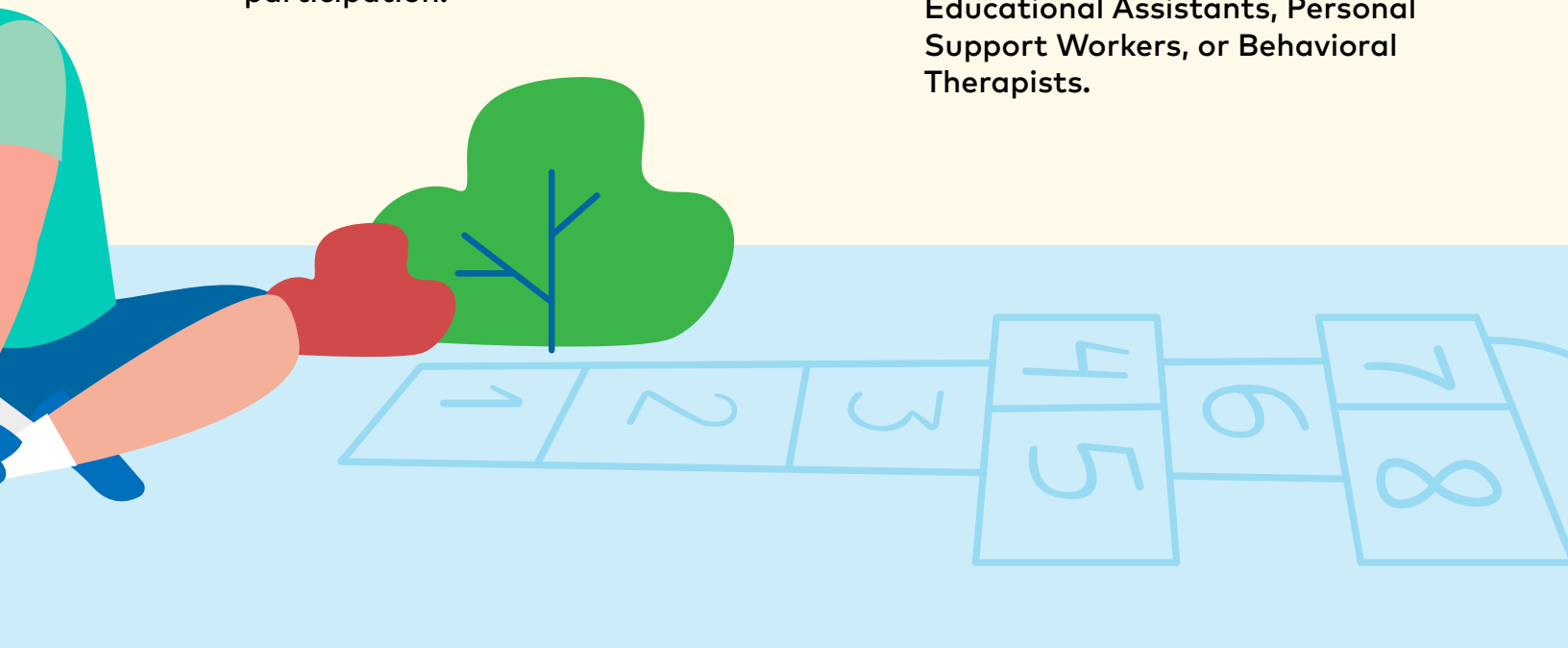
Visit **orillia.ca/BuddyProgram** for more information on how to bring an external support worker to camp.

What a Buddy Can Do:

- **Encouragement and Engagement**
  Help participants feel comfortable, make friends, and participate in activities.
- **Guidance and Transitions**
  Assist with navigating program routines, schedules, and transitions between activities.
- **Behavior Support**
  Use redirection techniques, positive reinforcement, and encouragement to help participants manage challenges.
- **Safety Awareness**
  Monitor and promote safe participation in all activities.
- **Communication Support**
  Help participants express their needs and interact with peers and staff.
- **Program Adaptations**
  Help modify activities as needed to ensure inclusion and participation.

What a Buddy Cannot Do:

- **Provide Hands-On Physical Support**
  no lifts, transfers, or physical interventions.
- **Administer Medication**
  Families must make alternative arrangements for medication administration.
- **Assist with Toileting or Personal Care**
  Buddies can provide verbal reminders but cannot physically assist with changing, toileting, or hygiene needs.
- **Handle Unsafe Behavior**
  If a participant displays behaviors that pose a risk to themselves or others, staff will follow the Behavior Procedure and contact parents/guardians if necessary.
- **Act as a One-on-One Therapist or Specialist**
  Buddies are not certified as Child and Youth Workers, Educational Assistants, Personal Support Workers, or Behavioral Therapists.



Requesting a Buddy

How to Apply
To help us provide the best Buddy match for you or your child, please complete the Participant Intake Form. This form allows us to prepare our staff and program environment to support your child's unique needs.

Day Camps:

- The Participant Intake Form can be completed between May 1 and June 20.
- Once submitted, a staff member will contact you to finalize your child's placement and ensure support is organized.

Registered Programs:

- A Buddy request must be submitted at least two weeks before the program start date to allow time for staffing arrangements.
- Once submitted, a staff member will contact you to finalize your child's placement and ensure support is organized.

Costs

Day Camps

Participants are eligible for up to three weeks of Buddy support during summer day camps. Fees are structured as follows:

- **Week 1:** Free Buddy support + the cost of the camp.
- **Additional Weeks:** $375 for Buddy support + the cost of the camp.

Registered Programs

Participants can access Buddy support for seasonal registered programs, provided staffing is available.

- **Cost:** $80 for Buddy support + the cost of the program.

Important Notes:

- **For Day Camps Only.** Spaces are limited, and the City of Orillia works to provide equal access to support. The Buddy intake form opens on April 7, 2025 at 7 a.m. and concludes on June 13. Spots can be secured by filling out the participant intake form anytime after April 7, and a staff member will reach out.
- While we aim to assign the same Buddy to your child for the duration of the program, unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness) may require changes. We will notify you as soon as possible if this occurs.
- Buddies may require short breaks throughout the day. During these times, a qualified staff member, such as a Camp Coordinator, Supervisor, or Counsellor, will assist your child and remain informed of their needs.

Program Expectations

The Buddy Program aims to create a positive, safe, and fun environment. All participants are expected to:

- Be active participants in program activities.
- Use respectful language.
- Follow program guidelines, including the "Hands Off" policy.
- Be independent in toileting and personal care (verbal prompts can be provided).
- Can safely interact within the program environment.
- Attend school successfully (if school-aged), with or without support.

If a participant requires additional assistance beyond what our Buddies can provide, families may need to arrange their own external support.

Sponsor a Buddy

Are you interested in making a difference in our community? By sponsoring a Buddy, you can help provide valuable support for children to participate fully in our programs and camps. Your generosity ensures that every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and make lasting memories.

Financial assistance may be available.

If you require sponsorship, please indicate "Request Sponsorship" on the Participant Intake Form, and a staff member will follow up with you.

Want to help support a child in need?

Learn more about how you can make a difference by visiting our "Sponsor a Buddy" page at **orillia.ca/BuddyProgram.**

Visit our Sponsor a Buddy Package for more information on how you can get involved and make a lasting impact.

Together, we can create an inclusive and supportive community for all!

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