

Dementia Friends for K-2 Champion's Training

Hi, Champions. I'm Maren Levad, the Dementia Friendly Initiatives Program Manager at Trellis. Welcome to this training on how to lead the Dementia Friends Kindergarten through second grade information session. It's created for five to eight-year-olds. This curriculum looks a little different than our adult version. Because kids are different learners. They learn by moving, talking, sharing, and playing. That means less talking to them and more talking with them. Additionally, this session should run about 30 minutes, half the time of an adult session. You'll also need to handle a little classroom management and that's totally normal. If that is something that is new to you, hopefully there'll be a teacher, scout leader, or librarian who can help you manage the group. Now, before we begin, let's hit on the supplies.

So what you're going to need is a pre-made brain cap. Which requires printers, scissors, tape, or glue. Or you can just print off at the end of the document. A brain map. You're going to need What Kids Ask PDF. And I have printed it out and laminated it on 11 by 17. I will put it the right direction. But you could also just put this up on your screen. You're gonna need a book. So we recommend the Remember Balloons by Jesse Oliveros or another picture book, and we have provided some options for you. Before the session, I suggest you write the words 'Dementia Friend' on the board. Or use the 'What Kids Ask' poster. We see Dementia Friends right there. So! Let's walk through the lesson together.

We'll break it down into seven short segments. Each has a goal, timing, and tips. So let's begin! Segment one. What is a friend? This should take about three minutes. The goal of this is to introduce yourself and the concept of friendship. Start by saying, 'Hi.' I'm here to talk to you about a program called Dementia Friends. I bet you know one of those words well, and the other might be new to you. So let's start with the word you know. Friend. So ask the group, what does a friend do? Let them respond. You might hear things like be kind, share, or help people. Repeat back what you hear or write it down. Summarize. All of the things you've heard and say, you all know a lot about being a friend.

Then say, now we'll get to the other word in a minute, dementia. But first, let's talk a little bit about how the body and brain grow and change. So now we move to segment two. The Body and Brain Change, which should take about three minutes. The goal of this segment is to normalize changes to the body and brain over time. Ask what happens to your body as you grow? Some possible answers are get taller, get stronger, get faster. Summarize those and then ask, what happens to your brain as you grow? Possible answers might be learn more, your brain gets bigger. Then

you might ask, what happens to a body when you get older, like a grandparent? Some possible answers would be get slower, use a walker, lose your hearing.

And finally, you'll ask, what happens to your brain as you get older like a grandparent? Possible answers are forget things, and other answers you might come up with. So validate all their answers and say, 'All of these are great ideas.' As we age, both our bodies and our brains change. That's totally normal. Now we move to segment three. The brain is the boss. This should take you about three minutes. The brain is the boss. The goal is to help kids understand basic brain function. Today, your brain is the boss of your body. It controls what you think, feel and do. Can you say that with me? Think, feel, and do. And now is the time we're going to bring out the brain cap. or brain image.

And you're going to ask for a volunteer. OOF— My volunteer is very heavy. You're going to place the cap on the volunteer's head. In the correct direction, What? And your volunteer is going to help you as you point to different brain areas. So this part helps you make decisions. This part controls your breathing and heartbeat, things you don't even think about. And then say. Today we're focusing on one part of the brain. In the hippocampus. It helps us with memory. And then thank your volunteer. Thank you. We're going to move to segment four, the memory game, which should take about three minutes. The goal is to experience how memory works. Say, let's play a memory game. Everyone stand up. Start with one action. Say, touch your nose. And then people touch their nose.

And then try to move to two, say. Touch your nose and pat your belly. Go. Keep going up to five. You might say: touch your nose, pat your head, turn around, wave and sit down. These are all options that you can use— I would encourage you to be as inclusive as possible. So if you have folks who don't have the ability to do any of those, try to be aware of your environment and come up with things that are inclusive of everyone in your audience. Most of all, make it fun and encouraging. Ask at the end of the game, was that easy or hard to remember? And do a second round with new actions. Something like stand up, touch your ear, jump once, turn around, sit down. And say, 'That was trickier,' right?

Getting them all at one time— you did a great job. So now we move to segment five. The second word in our name, dementia. Dementia Friends. This should take about three minutes. The goal here is to introduce the word dementia, and common questions kids ask. Say, 'As our brains get older, some people start to have problems with memory. Sometimes that's because of a disease called dementia.' Hold up the 'What Kids Ask' poster or PDF, or have it on a slide deck. Say, 'When we talk to kids about dementia, they often have these four big questions.' We're going to read them aloud. Is dementia contagious? Will everyone get dementia when they're older? Is it someone's fault they get dementia? And can you still enjoy being with someone who has dementia?

And then say, 'Let's write a story together and see if it helps us answer some of these.' This gets us to segment six. Read *The Remember Balloons*, which takes about five minutes. And the goal is to use storytelling to answer common fears about dementia. So we're going to read the book aloud and, of course, pause occasionally to connect with the kids. So. Here's the book I recommend. It's called *The Remember Balloons*, but in our document we have many other options. The reason we choose this book is because it is short, it is read aloud-friendly, and it answers a lot of the big questions. So. I'm going to read it aloud to you. If you don't want to read the book with me, feel free to skip ahead a few minutes.

But we're going to read it just so you can hear how people might be able to answer the questions together. I have lots and lots of balloons, way more than my little brother. This one's my favorite, I tell him. pointing to the balloon filled with my last birthday party. When I look at it, I can see the pony again. I can still taste the chocolate frosting. Mom and Dad have more balloons than I do. Grandpa has lived so long, he has more balloons than all of us together. And the stories he has inside those balloons? They're better than ponies and chocolate. What's in your yellow balloon? I ask him. Grandpa's eyes light up. We just come back from picking blackberries along the muddy banks of the creek. Our berry-splattered faces gave Aunt Nell's cow such a fright she didn't make milk for days.

What about that blue one, Grandpa? That's the time I lost my favorite dog, Jack. Grandpa chuckles. I found him chasing butterflies next to the schoolhouse. Only Jack could get me to school on a Saturday. And that one, I point to a purple balloon above his head. Grandpa looks up and smiles, his face alive with remembering. That's the day I married your grandma in the little church on Cedar Lane. We danced that night under the stars and oh how I loved her. I have to ask him about the silver balloon because I have that one too. That was the day we stood on the dock till the sun went down, feeling tug after tug on our lines. Grandpa and I must have caught a thousand fish. Grandpa ruffles my hair like he always does.

That's one of my favorite balloons. Mine too, I say. Grandpa has been having problems with his balloons lately. One will get caught in a tree and he'll tell me the same story over and over. Let me tell you about the Christmas I went to Aunt Nell's farm, Grandpa says. Even though he just finished telling me about it. Other times, a balloon will float right out of his hand and he won't even notice it. It's okay, Grandpa. I yell as I run after it. Every time I almost reach it. But it slips away.

Something is wrong with Grandpa, I tell my parents. He can't hold on to his balloons anymore. Mom looks at me with sad eyes. That happens sometimes when people grow older.

Grandpa's balloons start floating away faster and faster. Running down the streets

and up hills, I watch the balloons grow smaller. He finally loses the silver one. I watch it float away until I can't see it anymore.

Why did you let it go? I yelled. That was our balloon. Then I sit on the sidewalk and cry. I feel grandpa pat my back, but he doesn't ruffle my hair like he always did. Why are you crying, child? There's nothing to cry about.

One day I go to see him and all his balloons are gone. Grandpa, I say. But he doesn't look at me. It'll be okay, Dad says. Look up. I have new balloons now. A yellow one filled with blackberries and a cow. A blue one filled with grandpa and his favorite dog. A purple one filled with a wedding day. See, Mom says. Now they're yours to share. So I climb into Grandpa's lap and begin telling him about my new balloons. The end. So you can see how kids pretty quickly pick up that the balloons are memories, and then they start to really enjoy this story. After the story, return to the four questions and ask them to help you answer them. The first question: Is dementia contagious? Dementia is not contagious.

It's not like a cold that you can catch. It's more like someone getting a skinned knee. It just happens to them. Will everyone get dementia when they're older? Not everyone gets dementia. Some people keep sharp memories their whole life. Is it someone's fault if they get dementia? It's not anyone's fault. Doctors are still learning what causes it, but it's definitely not anyone's fault. Can you still enjoy being with someone who has dementia? You can still enjoy being with someone who has dementia. You can laugh, play games, share stories, just maybe in a new way. So once you've answered those questions, you're coming to the final wrap up. Now we're in segment seven: 'Being a Dementia Friend.' This should take about five minutes. The goal is to empower our students and our kids to be a Dementia Friend.

Say, now let's put our two words together, dementia and friend. Ask, what are some ways we can be a good friend to someone with dementia? Let them respond. You might hear, 'be kind,' 'be patient,' 'share memories.' Help them feel included. And you can see that's exactly right. You don't need to fix anything. Just being a kind and thoughtful friend really helps. Finally, we say thank you. This should take about a minute. Our goal is to celebrate and affirm their new role. Say you've learned about the brain, memory, dementia, and how to be a good friend. That means you are now official Dementia Friends. Thank you for being such great listeners and helpers today. That is a Dementia Friends session for K-2. Some quick notes for you. Expect wiggly bodies and curious questions. Always validate answers and thank them for sharing with the group. Repeat back what kids say to show that they're being heard. And remember, there's no need for perfect answers. Just be present, kind, and open. Thank you for being Dementia Champions and for helping our young Friends become Dementia Friends.