



Youth Curriculum K-2

A note to our Champions: This curriculum looks different than our adult curriculum. Why? Because kids are different learners! You should expect more talking with students and less talking to them – as well as time spent moving, sharing, and some classroom management.

During **Question and Response** time, you can write what you are hearing or simply repeat back and validate. Remember to summarize what you heard and thank them for their thoughtful answers before moving to the next thing.

Supplies:

- ☐ [pre-made brain cap](#) (requires printer, scissors, tape or glue) OR the photo included at the end of this document
- ☐ What Kids Ask PDF
- ☐ *The Remember Ballons* by Jessie Oliveros OR other picture book, see end of document for suggestions

Total Lesson Time: About 30 minutes

What is a Friend? (3 minutes)

Goal: Introduce yourself and what the session is about.

- Introduce yourself!
- Say: “I am here to talk with you about a program called Dementia Friends. I bet you know one of those words well, and the other might be new to you. First, let’s talk about the one you know well.”
- ★ Questions and Responses:
 - Ask: What does it mean to be a friend?
 - *Possible things you’ll hear: be kind, be nice, share*
- Say: “Great job, you really know lots of ways to be a friend. Now, I promise we’ll get to the first word in a minute but first let’s talk a bit about the body and the brain and how they can each grow and change.”

The Body and The Brain Change (3 minutes)

Goal: Set a foundation that it’s normal for the body and brain to change.



★ Questions and Responses:

- Ask: What happens to your body as you grow?
 - *Possible things you'll hear: get faster, get taller, get stronger*
- Ask: What happens to your brain as you grow?
 - *Possible things you'll hear: get smarter, brain grows bigger*
- Ask: What happens to your body as you get older, like a grandparent?
 - *Possible things you'll hear: get slower, use a walker, lose hearing*
- Ask: What happens to your brain as you get older, like a grandparent?
 - *Possible things you'll hear: forget things*

The Brain is the Boss (3 minutes)

Goal: Learn a little about the brain. Use the Brain cap if you have it or use the image at the end of this document.

- Say: “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.**”
- Say: “Should we take a look at someone’s brain? That would be a little tricky because it is inside your body.”
- Ask for a volunteer. Place the brain cap on a kid. Point to different parts on the cap as you chat. Point out areas of the brain and what it helps with, guided by the cap or illustration.
- Say: “Your brain is made up of lots of different parts. We are not going to learn what all of those parts are today. The key thing to know is that different structures are in charge of different things. The front of your brain is in charge of decision making. The very base of your brain is in charge of things you don’t even have to think about like your heartbeat and breathing. The part of the brain we are talking about today is memory.”
- Point out the hippocampus area (located in the temporal lobe by your ears), then thank your volunteer and invite them to sit back down.

Memory Game (3 minutes)

Goal: Understand memory

Note: You do not have to do the exact list of things we share here. Be creative and have fun!



- Say: “Should we play a memory game? Everyone stand up. I am going to give you one thing to do, let’s see if you can remember it. Everyone touch your nose. WOW! That was super easy everyone did it. Now I am going to give you two things to do. Touch your nose and pat your belly. Still pretty easy. Let’s try 900 things. Ok, that is probably too hard, let’s try three. Touch your nose, pat your head, turn around. Still too easy. How about four things. Touch your nose, pat your head, turn around and wave. Man, you kids are good at this. Ok, what about five things? Touch your nose, pat your head, turn around, wave and sit down. What good memories you have. We are going to five again but they are going to be five brand new things. You are going to need to listen super carefully in order to remember all of them. Wait until I say go. Stand up, touch your ear, jump once, turn around and sit down. Ready go. Ooh, that was way harder.”
- Ask them how that was, if it was easier or harder. Thank them for playing the memory game with you.

The Second Word: Dementia (3 minutes)

Goal: Introduce four big questions

Supplies: Share the What Kids Ask Poster or Document

- Say: “As we get older some folks start to have problems with memory and other things. Those memory problems may be because of a disease called dementia. When folks chat with kids about dementia, kids tend to worry about four different things.”
- Share the image or printout of the Four Things Kids Ask. Read them aloud.
 - Is dementia contagious?
 - Will everyone get dementia as they age?
 - Sometimes kids worry if dementia might be their fault or that someone caused the dementia.
 - The last thing is that kids worry about if they will still like being with someone when they have dementia.
- Say: “Let’s read the book and see if it answers any of our questions.”

The Remember Balloons Story (5 minutes)



Goal: Share a story about dementia and answer some of the questions above. As you read, feel free to connect it to those worries or chat about what's happening in the story. Kids love to make connections!

Note: If you are looking for a story that connects with a different cultural group or one that you have in your library, there are many to choose from and are listed at the end of this document.

- Read the story
- After the story is done, return to the four questions and answer them with the kids input.
 - Say: “Dementia is not contagious. You know when someone in your house gets a cold and then everyone in the whole house gets a cold? Dementia is not like that. Dementia is more like when you fall and skin your knee. That does not mean your friend is also going to get a skinned knee.”
 - Say: “Does everyone get dementia as they age? Nope. Some old people have a sharp memory sharp their whole life.”
 - Say: “Sometimes kids worry if dementia might be their fault or that someone caused the dementia. We have some ideas, but no one is yet super sure what causes dementia but one thing that we know FOR SURE is that it is no one’s fault. It just happens sometimes.”
 - Say: “The last thing is that kids worry about if they will still like being with someone when they have dementia. You can absolutely still enjoy your time with someone even if they have dementia.”

Being a Dementia Friend (5 minutes)

Goal: Showing how they can help make a difference

- Say: Now let’s put our two first words together: Dementia and Friend.
- ★ Questions and Responses:
 - Ask: What are some ways we can be a good friend to someone with dementia?
 - *Possible things you’ll hear: be kind, be patient, share your memories*

Thank You! (1 Minute)

Goal: Share gratitude



- Say: *"You all came up with so many ways to be kind and helpful to people living with dementia. You learned a little about memory, the brain, and dementia. You are now officially Dementia Friends. Thank you for being such great members of our community."*



Picture Book Options

There are dozens of picture books that have been written about dementia for children. Many children's books are best read one-on-one, where more questions or information can be shared between the reader and the child. The ones below have been selected for large group storytelling sessions. They are short, use engaging language and pictures, and are accurate but don't try to share too much difficult information. Most importantly, they all empower children to make a difference in the lives of people living with dementia. When choosing what book you may use in a session, consider your audience, what book is easily accessible to you, and what book you enjoy reading aloud.

These books are alphabetical by title and do not indicate preference. If you are looking for a book that represents a different cultural group than shown below – there may be a book at your area library! As always, test drive it at home for content and read-aloud-ability before using it for a session.

Grandfather's Story Cloth by Linda Gerdner and Sarah Langford

Reading time: 6 minutes

Text in both English and Hmong

A grandson connects with his Hmong grandfather who is living with Alzheimer's disease through a story cloth the grandfather made of his life in Laos.

Possible discussion questions:

- How does Chersheng feel about being forgotten by Grandfather?
- Is it Grandfather's fault that he's forgetting things?
- How does Chersheng help Grandfather?

Grandpa and Lucy: A Story about Love and Dementia by Edie Weinstein

Edie Weinstein was a ninth grader in Saint Paul, Minnesota who *Grandpa and Lucy* for a Girl Scout Silver Award Project to help more people, particularly youth, learn about dementia. She wanted to make it more enjoyable for young people to talk to their relatives or other older friends who have dementia.

Reading time: 5 minutes

Possible discussion questions:

- How does Lucy feel about being forgotten by Grandpa?
- Is it Grandpa's fault that he's forgetting things?



- How does Lucy help Granpa?

Other Words for Nonno by Dave Cameron

Reading Time: 3 minutes

A granddaughter helps her Italian grandfather recall words by putting up signs along their walks.

Possible discussion questions:

- How does Jill feel about Nonno forgetting his words?
- Is it Nonno's fault that he's forgetting things?
- How does Jill help Nonno?

The Remember Ballons by Jessie Oliveros

Reading Time: 3 minutes

An African American grandson helps collect memories for his grandfather when he starts to lose them.

Possible discussion questions:

- Is it his grandfather's fault that he's losing his balloons?
- How does James help his grandfather have a good life?
- Is dementia contagious? When his grandfather starts losing balloons, does James lose balloons, too?

Singing with Momma Lou by Linda Jacobs Altman

Reading Time: 5 minutes

An African American granddaughter uses music from the Civil Rights era to connect with her grandmother living with Alzheimer's disease.

Possible discussion questions:

- How does Tamika feel about being forgotten by Momma Lou?
- Is it Momma Lou's fault that she's forgetting things?
- How does Tamika help Momma Lou find joy?

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox



Reading Time: 3 minutes

A young boy learns different definitions of memory and collects items for a neighbor who is losing her own memories.

Possible discussion questions:

- Does everyone in the nursing home have dementia?
- Is it Miss Nancy's fault that she's forgetting things?
- How does Wilfrid help Miss Nancy?

