

Become a Care Home Friend Challenge: Notes for Leaders

Week 2: “Connecting with people of different ages”

The first two weeks of our challenge are designed to get children thinking about older people and prepare them for connecting with a care home. The activities lay the groundwork for intergenerational connections.

In week 2, children and young people think about the different people in their own lives and consider who, where and how they mix with people of different ages, and why this might be a good idea. They will also reflect on their favourite memory of spending time with an older person.

The Key Stage 3 activity sheet includes a video ‘That Age Old Question’ exploring ageist attitudes. The video link is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDIYctjTn8>. We recommend watching it first to ensure you are happy sharing the content.

Things to consider

- The activities state that often we aren’t as connected to people of different ages as we could be and this might mean that some people feel quite lonely and isolated.
 - Aside from helping to reduce loneliness, it’s worth highlighting that contact with different generations has other reciprocal advantages, for example children get to experience older adults’ humour, skills and wisdom, and vice versa for older adults who might experience these same things from young people, or perhaps different qualities such as energy and creativity.
 - This will help reinforce to children the idea of equity between generations and that both generations have something to gain from connecting together, it is not just something “nice” being “done to” the older generation.
- The concept of ‘an older person’ will likely vary between children. Some might have grandparents aged in their 40s or 50s. This could prompt a good discussion about ageing and language.
- With any conversations about older people, please be sensitive to the individual circumstances of young people; some may have recently lost a grandparent and these conversations may be a trigger

Alternative activity

- Instead of completing the “Window of Ages” activity, KS1 and KS2 children could instead write the names of the young people, adults and older adults they spend time with on 3 different pieces of coloured paper. These strips can then be made into a paper chain (either individually or as a whole class). Depending on the spread of colours, this will prompt discussion about which generations they usually spend time with (or not) and in what way.

Safeguarding

- Through these activities, children are encouraged to reflect on why it might be a good idea to spend time with older people, however we are not endorsing exclusive or unhealthy relationships with older adults. If any information shared by a young person causes concern, we advise you to follow your school’s safeguarding policy or see the NSPCC website for advice.