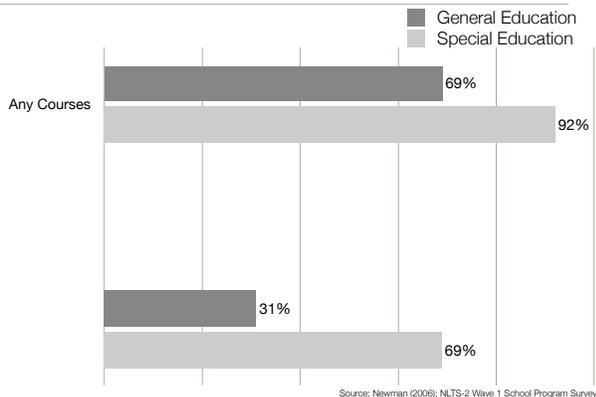
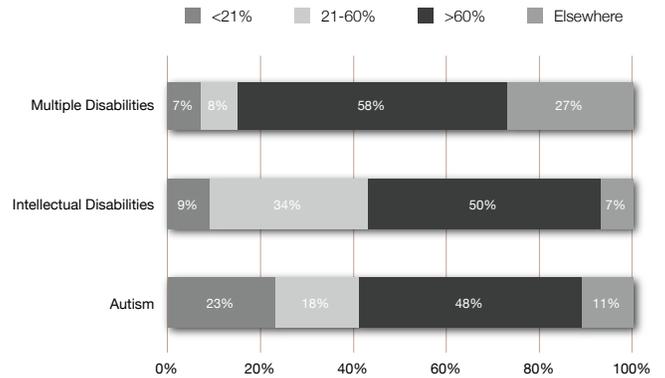


Where Do High School Students With Cognitive Disabilities Receive Instruction?

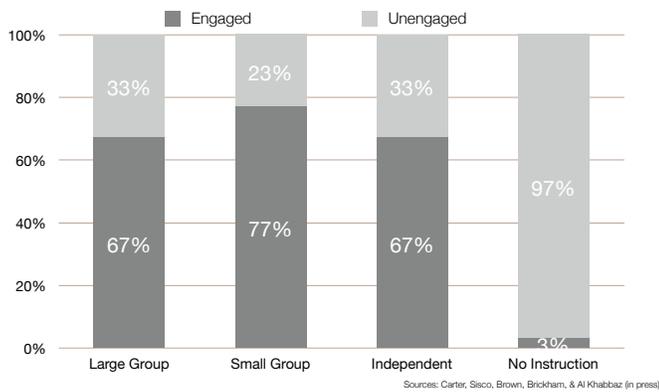


Source: Newman (2009); NLT-2 Wave 1 School Program Survey

In Pennsylvania...



Are Students Academically Engaged?

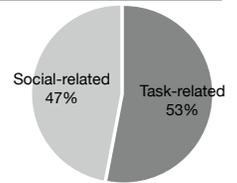


Sources: Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al Khabbaz (in press)

Findings

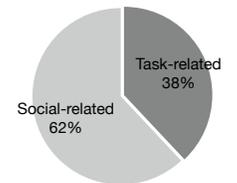
In core academic classes...

- There was no interaction during 23.5% of observations
- Interactions occurred with 2.1 different peers (12.4% of classmates)

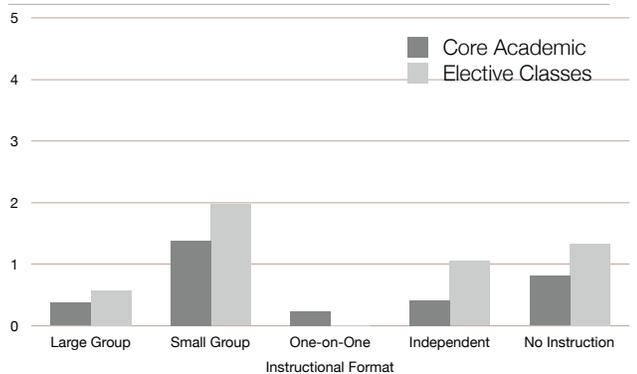


In elective/related arts classes...

- There was no interaction during 27.4% of observations
- Interactions occurred with 1.9 different peers (11.4% of classmates)

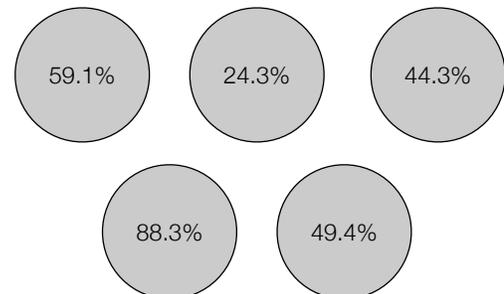


Are Students Interacting with Their Peers?



Sources: Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al Khabbaz (in press)

Beyond the Classroom: By the Numbers...



Source: NLT-2

Paraprofessionals: The Usual Supports

- More than 312,000 paraprofessionals
- One-on-one support in inclusive settings
- Increasingly requested by teachers and/or parents
- The “ticket” to inclusion?!?!



Reflecting on How We Provide Support

- What are the advantages of relying on adult-delivered supports?
- What are some of the potential drawbacks?
- Do our answers differ depending on...

- Grade level?
- School setting?
- Student characteristics?



Paraprofessionals: The Usual Supports

Adults may inadvertently...

- Set students apart
- Limit students' social interactions with their classmates
- Decrease contact between students general education teachers or other group leaders
- Hinder student learning and achievement
- Encourage unnecessary dependence on adults--limit self-determination

**“Be Careful What You Wish for ...”:
Five Reasons to Be Concerned About the
Assignment of Individual Paraprofessionals**

Michael F. Giangreco • Susan Yuen • Barbara McRea • Patricia Cameron • Justin Padden

Source: Giangreco et al. (2004)

| 2. SCREENING: Is our school overreliant on paraprofessionals or utilizing them inappropriately? | | You know there is a problem when... | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Purpose: This screening tool is designed to assist your team in determining whether your school is overreliant or inappropriately reliant on paraprofessionals. Directions: For each of the 18 examples below, put a check in the box to the right of the statement. | | Happens Frequently/ Not Often | Happens Sometimes or Not Often | Happens Never or Not Often |
| 1 | You know that the number of students in your class that one of students with disabilities is to assist | | | |
| 2 | students with fine or cursive pen (or, conveniently) | | | |
| 3 | students with separated within side of room) to | | | |
| 4 | paraprofessionals are unfamiliar and experience some disabilities in the | | | |
| 5 | students with primary instruction from paraprofessionals while special educators do paperwork and manage the activities of paraprofessionals. | | | |
| 6 | classroom teachers are minimally or superficially involved with students with disabilities who are placed in their classes. | | | |
| 7 | paraprofessionals make curricular or instructional decisions or make adaptations without teacher or special educator oversight. | | | |
| 8 | students with disabilities are highly and situationally dependent on paraprofessionals. | | | |
| 9 | paraprofessionals have some programs communication and motor developed working relationships with the general education students with disabilities than teachers in special education do. | | | |
| 10 | paraprofessionals provide academic support to students where they are under- or unqualified. | | | |

School-Based Screening to Determine Overreliance on Paraprofessionals

Michael F. Giangreco and Stephen M. Broer

FOCUS ON AUTISM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
VOLUME 22, NUMBER 3, FALL 2007
PAGES 149-158

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: Our responses to the screening statements suggest that we should continue to pursue further planning and actions with the Center for Learning Advancement. The items listed marked "Happens Sometimes" or "Happens Frequently" the greater the school's work. Code 308 or 309 and proceed accordingly.

www.uvm.edu/~cdci/evolve/

Advantages of Peers

- Peers are “experts” on social skills
- Peers are not as “stigmatizing”
- Peers are great problem solvers
- Peers are future supports
- Peers benefit...
- Peers are readily available



Peer Support Arrangements

Improving Students' Social Lives and Learning

Peer Support Arrangements

- Facilitate student participation in class activities
- Provide frequent feedback and encouragement
- Model communication and other skills
- Promote interaction with other classmates
- Support progress related to IEP goals
- Support current behavior intervention plans, as appropriate

Basic Steps...

- Identifying students with severe disabilities who need assistance to participate in class activities;
- Recruiting peers from within the same classroom to help provide some of these supports;
- Arranging for students to sit next to each other and remain in close proximity during class activities;
- Orienting peers to their roles, explaining the rationale for their involvement, and showing them basic strategies for supporting the academic and social participation of their classmate;
- Providing ongoing monitoring, feedback, and assistance to peers and their partners throughout the semester, as needed; and,
- Shifting paraprofessionals to a broader support role within the classroom through which they assist all students, as directed by the teacher

Paraprofessional Roles

- Classroom versus one-on-one support
- Modeling for peer supports how to interact and promote class participation
- Adapting the course curricula, assignments and projects (under guidance of special and regular education teacher)
- Supervising and monitoring the peers to ensure that student with disabilities is fully participating
- Fading presence and direct support

Evidence of Effectiveness

Findings from recent research studies...

Carter, Sisco, Melekoglu, and Kurkowski
Wisconsin Research Foundation

Kennedy, Cushing, Carter, Clark, and colleagues Project
ACCESS (U.S. Department of Education)

Muriel

- Significant cognitive disabilities, autism

Brian

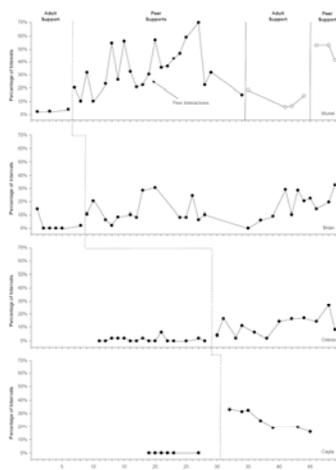
- Significant cognitive and physical disabilities
- Limited verbal speech

Odessa

- Significant intellectual disabilities
- Extremely quiet

Cayla

- Significant intellectual and physical disabilities
- Uses AAC



Participating Students and Classroom Settings

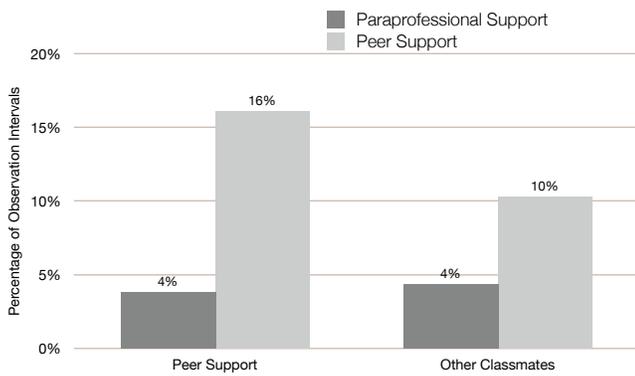
- 50 middle and high school students with developmental disabilities
- Enrolled in academic general education class
- 5 observations with paraprofessionals
- 5 observations with peer supports

Ecology
English
History
Language arts
Math

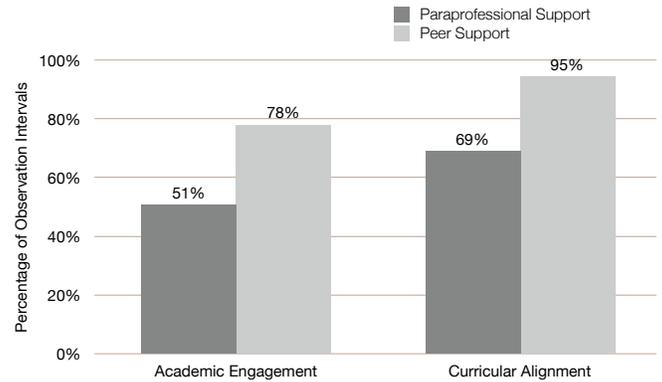
Science
Social studies
Spanish
Speech
World geography



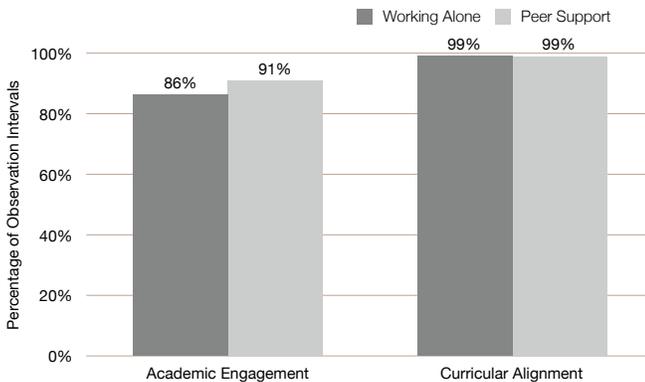
How Do Peer Support Interventions Impact Students' Peer Interactions?



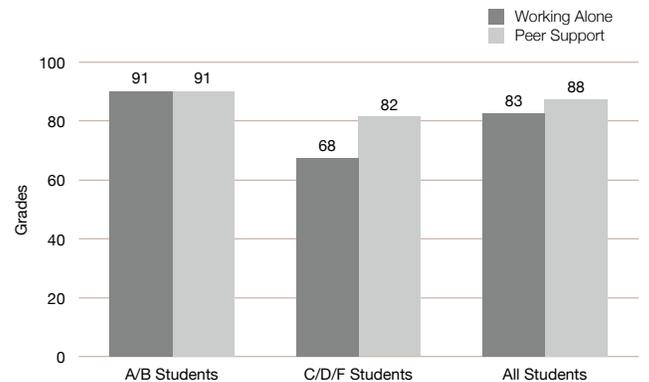
How Do Peer Support Interventions Impact Students' Academic Participation?



Do Peer Supports Benefit From These Interventions?



Do Peer Supports Benefit From These Interventions?



What Are We Learning?

- 🔊 **Rigor** and **Relationships** require support
- 🔊 Improvements in engagement and curricular consistency for students with disabilities
- 🔊 Serving as a peer support does not have detrimental academic affects for peer supports
- 🔊 The frequency of interactions increased for students with disabilities

What Are People Saying?



“ For this student, participation has been great and other students have benefited from having the paraprofessional freed up to help more.”

Special Educator

What Do Peer Supports Say?

- Developing new friendships
- Enhanced appreciation of diversity
- Increased awareness of disability issues
- Increased advocacy skills—future citizens
- Personal growth and sense of accomplishment
- Greater self-esteem
- Have fun
- Interest in pursuing careers in the field

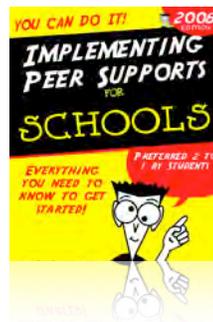


Getting Started

Where do you begin?

Implementing Peer Support Strategies

1. Identifying classroom expectations and needed supports, adaptations, etc.
2. Decide on needed supports
3. Recruiting peer supports
4. Equipping peers to work together
5. Monitoring and providing feedback
6. Facilitating relationships beyond the classroom



1. Identifying Classroom Expectations and Needed Supports

- What are the common classroom routines and expectations?
- How will the student participate?
- What supports and adaptations need to be provided?
- Who will provide these things?



Academic Success for All Learners/
Understanding Individual Differences

Access to the General Education Curriculum for Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Lisa S. Cushing • Nitasha M. Clark • Erik W. Carter • Craig H. Kennedy

• Can students with significant cognitive disabilities make progress on individualized goals within the context of the general curriculum. Further, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; Pub. L. 107-110) calls on educators to align academic content for students

Figure 1. Assessment of Instructional Activities for Jenny

| Subject | English | Grade | Semester |
|---------------------------|---|---|----------|
| General Education Teacher | Mr. Dooley | Team | Fall |
| Typical Activities | Frequency and Student Response | Student Adaptations | |
| Whole Class Oral Reading | Weekly—Students read from a paragraph to the class. | J will sit with a peer. Peer guides J's finger in the selection and prompts J to look at pictures related to the story (e.g., pictures of characters, setting). | |
| Lecture | Daily—Students watch as teacher models skills for prereading, writing, and research. Students listen to the process and presentation. | J sits with a peer and the peer prompts J through the presentation. J may help teacher demonstrate. | |

Classroom Activities and Peer Support Brainstorming

Student Goals:

At the beginning of class...

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| The student could... | The paraprofessional could... | Peers could... |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|

When there are lectures or whole group instruction...

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| The student could... | The paraprofessional could... | Peers could... |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|

When there are small group or lab activities...

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| The student could... | The paraprofessional could... | Peers could... |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|

When there is independent seatwork...

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| The student could... | The paraprofessional could... | Peers could... |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|

When _____

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| The student could... | The paraprofessional could... | Peers could... |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|

At the end of class...

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| The student could... | The paraprofessional could... | Peers could... |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|

2. Recruiting Peer Supports

Considerations in Selecting Peer Supports

- Ask the student...
- Similar ages
- Expressed interest
- Consistent attendance
- Shared interests
- Existing social networks
- Interpersonal skills and willingness to learn

Identifying Peer Supports

| Approaches | Advantages | Drawbacks |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Student-identified peers | | |
| Class announcements | | |
| Teacher recommendations | | |
| Circle of friends | | |
| Rotating peer supports | | |
| Universal peer supports | | |
| Peers from other settings | | |

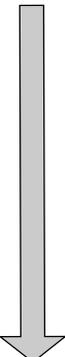
4. Equipping Peers to Work Together

- Rationale for involving peers in providing support
- Broad description of IEP goals
- Confidentiality and language
- Instructional strategies
- Communication strategies
- Giving feedback
- What not to do...

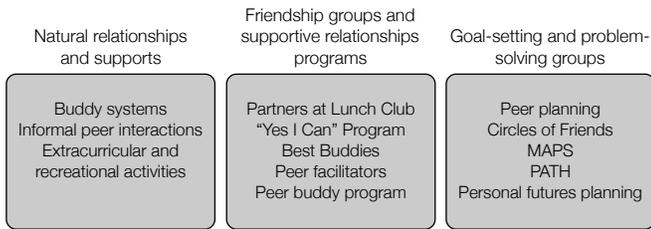
5. Monitoring and Providing Feedback

- How will the team communicate about future lessons?
- Who will adapt materials?
- Who will train and give feedback to the peer supports and partners?
- Who will collect data on IEP goals?
- Who will model support strategies?
- What is the plan for dealing with inappropriate behavior of the peer supports or the student with disabilities?

Can The Student Do It..

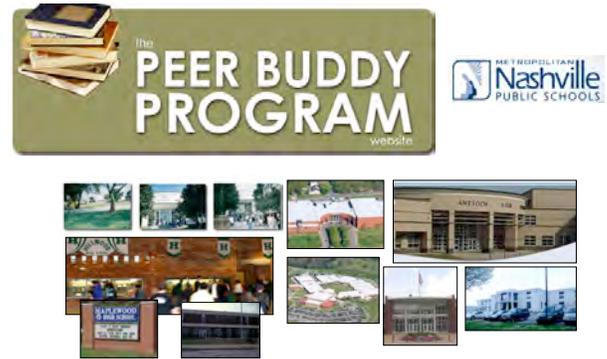
- 
- On his or her own? *Is it more fun to do it with someone else?*
 - If given the right technology or adaptive equipment?
 - If given just a little instruction?
 - With a little help from a friend or peer?
 - With someone else's help in the setting? *Okay initially ... less so later*
 - With *occasional* help from a teacher or other staff?
 - With *continuous* help from a teacher or other staff?

6. Facilitating Interactions Beyond the Classroom



Source: Jarmey & Snell (2006)

School-Wide Peer Support Programs



Program Description

- Credit course
- Peer buddies spend at least one period each day with their peers with disabilities
- Peer buddies serve as positive role models
- Peer buddies provide the support that their partner needs to be included in curricular and extracurricular activities at school
- Peer buddies may accompany partners to community-based work training or off-campus instruction

Program Variations

- General vs. special education classes
- One-to-one vs. group interactions
- Friendship vs. helping relationships
- Students with disabilities as peer buddies

Seven Steps to Getting Started...

1. Develop a peer support course for elective credit
2. Recruit Peer Buddies
3. Screen and match students
4. Orient peers
5. Support students
6. Address lunch and other non-instructional times
7. Establish an advisory board

TABLE 1.1 Seven Steps to Starting a Peer Buddy Program

Step 1: Develop a one-credit course.

1. Coordinate with your district's curriculum or peer-teaching center that allows peer buddies to spend at least one period each day with their partners with disabilities.
2. Negotiate a form of support with the administration, school counselors, and teachers in your school for the inclusion of students requiring special education services in general education activities.
3. Follow the established procedures of the local and state educational agencies when you apply for the new course offering.

Step 2: Recruit peer buddies.

1. Actively recruit peer buddies during the first year. After that, peer buddies will recruit for you.
2. Include announcements, notices, and letters to school-wide peer and PE's newsletters, informers, the school's electronic newsletter, and peer newsletters regarding the needs of your district.
3. Present information about the new program at a faculty meeting.
4. Have students write pre-qualified for course requirements.

Step 3: Screen and match students.

1. Have school counselors enter students who have serious, great attendance, and adequate grades.
2. Arrange for students to interview with the special education teacher.
3. Have students provide information regarding their past experience with students with diverse abilities and discuss criteria to address their skills and interests in their partner's challenges.
4. Allow students to observe in the classroom to learn about the role of a peer buddy and whether they would be an appropriate match for the role.

Step 4: Teach peer buddies to use instructional strategies.

1. Model the use of modeling and demonstration techniques.
2. Conduct a peer buddy session that includes the concept of "simple first" disability awareness, communication strategies, and targeted activities.
3. Communicate teachers' expectations for the peer buddy course including attendance and grading policies.
4. Provide opportunities for training with appropriate behavior, setting limits, and modifying general classroom environments.

Step 5: Evaluate the program.

1. Schedule assessment and feedback sessions with peer buddies to address their questions or concerns regarding work time partners.
2. Provide feedback on their instructional skills, time management, use of positive reinforcement, and activities suggested to work time partners.
3. Have peer buddies keep a daily journal of their activities and reflections, which should be reviewed weekly by the classroom teacher.
4. Establish a peer buddy cache, which allows students to share experiences and ideas as well as give the teacher an opportunity to offer ongoing training and feedback.

Step 6: Make a work book.

1. Develop a work book for the special education students to have in the classroom.
2. Develop a work book for the general education students to use in the program, including work sheets for their partners.
3. Develop a work book for the special education students to use in the program, including work sheets for their partners.
4. Develop a work book for the general education students to use in the program, including work sheets for their partners.

Step 7: Establish an advisory board.

1. Develop an advisory board that includes students (peer buddies and partners), students' parents, school counselors, and special education teachers, administrators, and school community.
2. Include community representatives to represent the peer buddy program to community-based activities, such as work organizations.
3. Meet at least once each year to discuss needs and suggestions for including and supporting the program. Thank all members for their participation.

Hughes & Carter (2008)

1. Develop a Credit Course Offering

- Establish a base of support with administration for inclusion of students with disabilities in school activities
- Incorporate course in the school's curriculum.
- Follow established procedures of LEA and SEA to apply for a new course
- Include course descriptions in school's class schedule
- Or, utilize an existing course, such as service-learning or peer mentoring course

2. Recruit Peer Buddies

- Guidance Department
- Advertising
 - Announcements, posters, flyers
 - Recruitment video
 - Articles in newspaper and PTA newsletter
- Presentations to clubs and targeted classes
- Peer Tutoring Week, buddies promote the program
- Introduce the course at faculty meeting
- Start slowly, establish course reputation

3. Screening Peers

- Referral through guidance counselor
- Interview with special education teacher
- Written application and teacher reference
- Allow students to observe in the classroom

4. Orienting Peers to Their Roles

- Hold an introductory meeting
- Communicate expectations, including attendance and grading
- Suggestions for dealing with challenging or inappropriate behavior
- Peer support and on-going training through Peer Buddy Club

5. Support Students

- Supervising teachers conduct observations and feedback sessions with Buddies
- Provide feedback to Peer Buddies on:
 - Interaction skills
 - Time management
 - Use of positive reinforcement
 - Instructional and motivational strategies
 - Activities engaged in with partners, curriculum modifications
- Buddies keep daily journal on activities and reflections—review weekly

6. Address Lunch and Other Non-instructional Times

- Invite Peer Buddies to join partners in the cafeteria
- Structure initially—specific days of the week
- Encourage Peer Buddies to invite their general education friends to join the group to increase “circle of friends”
- Invite general education students who cannot enroll in the course due to schedule conflicts

7. Establish an Advisory Group

- Invite representatives of all participants
 - Peer Buddies and partners
 - Parents
 - Administrators
 - Guidance counselors
 - General education and special education teachers
- Include community representatives to expand to community-based activities, such as work experiences
- Meet at least once each semester to evaluate and improve the program

Resources



- Carter, E. W., Cushing, L. S., & Kennedy, C. H. (available in December). *Peer support strategies: Improving students' social lives and learning*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Downing, J. E. (2005). *Teaching communication skills to students with severe disabilities* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Goldstein, H., Kaczmarek, L. A., & English, K. M. (2001). *Promoting social communication: Children with developmental disabilities from birth to adolescence*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes
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- Janney, R., & Snell, M. E. (2006). *Social relationships & peer support* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Sigafoos, J., Arthur-Kelly, N., & Butterfield, N. (2006). *Enhancing everyday communication for children with disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

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Classroom Activities and Peer Support Brainstorming

Student Goals:

At the beginning of class....

| <i>The student could...</i> | <i>The paraprofessional could...</i> | <i>Peers could...</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

When there are lectures or whole group instruction...

| <i>The student could...</i> | <i>The paraprofessional could...</i> | <i>Peers could...</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

When there are small group or lab activities...

| <i>The student could...</i> | <i>The paraprofessional could...</i> | <i>Peers could...</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

When there is independent seatwork...

| <i>The student could...</i> | <i>The paraprofessional could...</i> | <i>Peers could...</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

When _____...

| <i>The student could...</i> | <i>The paraprofessional could...</i> | <i>Peers could...</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

At the end of class...

| <i>The student could...</i> | <i>The paraprofessional could...</i> | <i>Peers could...</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

FIGURE 8.5 Seven Steps to Starting a Peer Buddy Program**Step 1: Develop a one-credit course.**

- Incorporate into your school's curriculum a peer tutoring course that allows peer buddies to spend at least one period each day with their partners with disabilities.
- Begin building a base of support with the administration, school counselors, and teachers in your school for the inclusion of students receiving special education services in general education activities.
- Follow the established procedures of the local and state educational agencies when you apply for the new course offering.

Step 2: Recruit peer buddies.

- Actively recruit peer buddies during the first year. After that, peer buddies will recruit for you.
- Include announcements, posters, articles in the school newspaper and PTA newsletter, videos on the school's closed-circuit television, and peer buddies speaking in school clubs and classes.
- Present information about the new program at a faculty meeting.
- Start slowly while you establish the course expectations.

Step 3: Screen and match students.

- Have school counselors refer students who have interest, good attendance, and adequate grades.
- Arrange for students to interview with the special education teachers.
- Have students provide information regarding their past experience with students with diverse abilities and about clubs or activities that they are involved in that their partners could join.
- Allow students to observe in the classroom to learn about the role of a peer buddy and whether they would be an appropriate match for the class.

Step 4: Teach peer buddies to use instructional strategies.

- Model the use of prompting and reinforcement techniques.
- Conduct a peer buddy orientation that includes the concept of "people first," disability awareness, communication strategies, and suggested activities.
- Communicate teachers' expectations for the peer buddy course including attendance and grading policies.
- Provide suggestions for dealing with inappropriate behavior, setting limits, and modifying general education curricula.

Step 5: Evaluate the program.

- Schedule observations and feedback sessions with peer buddies to address their questions or concerns.
- Provide feedback on their interaction skills, time management, use of positive reinforcement, and activities engaged in with their partners.
- Have peer buddies keep a daily journal of their activities and reflections, which should be reviewed weekly by the classroom teacher.
- Establish a peer buddy club, which allows students to share experiences and ideas as well as gives the teacher an opportunity to offer ongoing training and feedback.

Step 6: Hold a Lunch Bunch.

- Invite peer buddies to join special education students for lunch in the cafeteria.
- Encourage the peer buddies to invite their general education friends to join the group, increasing social contacts for their partners.
- Remind general education students who, because of class conflicts, are unable to enroll in the course to join the Lunch Bunch.

Step 7: Establish an advisory board.

- Develop an advisory board that includes students (peer buddies and partners), students' parents, participating general and special education teachers, administrators, and school counselors.
- Include community representatives to expand the peer buddy program to community-based activities, such as work experiences.
- Meet at least once each semester to obtain insight and suggestions for evaluating and improving the program. Thank all members for their participation.

Source: From "They are my best friends:" Peer buddies promote inclusion in high school by Hughes, C., Guth, C., Hall, S., Presley, J., Dye, M., & Byers, C., *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 31(5), 1999, 32-37. Copyright 1999 by The Council for Exceptional Children. Reprinted with permission.