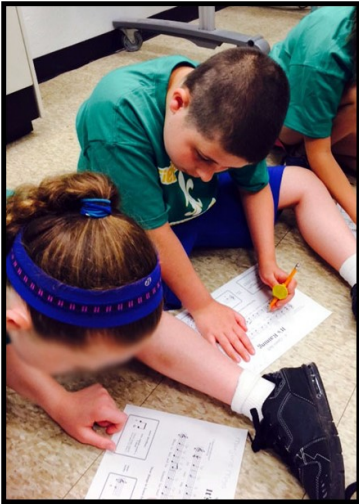


IMPLEMENTING PEER SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Based on the work of Dr. Erik Carter*

What are Peer Support Arrangements?

One or more peers without disabilities working together with a classmate with a significant disability, as a community of learners, supporting each other academically and socially.



When do they meet? Daily during general education classes

How many peers? Two to three are ideal

Who facilitates? Classroom teacher, paraprofessional, or special education teacher

What is the focus? Classroom participation, learning, and social interactions



Remember the “Peer Advantage”

- Peers are “experts” on social skills
- Peers are not as “stigmatizing” as adult support
- Peers are great problem solvers
- Peers provide support all the time (for other classmates without disabilities)
- Peers are future supports
- Peers benefit as well, both academically and socially
- Peers are readily available
- Peers are usually quite willing (if asked)

How do Peers Provide Support?

Peers...

- Facilitate student participation in class activities
- Provide frequent feedback and encouragement
- Model communication and other skills
- Promote interaction with other classmates
- Support student learning (without knowing the exact IEP goals)
- Support current behavior intervention plans (without becoming a behavior manager)

Basic Steps for Implementing Peer Support Arrangements

1. Identify students with disabilities who need assistance to participate in general education class activities.
2. Identify classes.
3. Identify school personnel who need to be involved.
4. Recruit peers from within the same classroom to help provide some of these supports. Arrange for students to sit next to each other.
5. Create *individualized peer support plans* for each focus student.
6. Orient peers to their roles, explaining the rationale for their involvement, and showing them basic support strategies.
7. Shift the practices of paraprofessionals from direct 1:1 support for students with disabilities to a broader support role as a facilitator and classroom based support.
 - Provide ongoing feedback and assistance to peers and their partners throughout the semester.
 - Provide assistance to all students in the class as appropriate.



*Created from Dr. Erik Carter’s Regional Training for the Kentucky Peer Support Network Project (2014-2015)

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General Ideas for Students Supporting Each Other

- Helping keep assignments and class materials organized
- Reminders on how to follow established classroom routines
- Working together to pass out class materials
- Encouraging interactions with other classmates
- Paraphrasing lectures or rephrasing key ideas
- Providing prompting or guidance to answer a question or contribute an idea
- Clarifying a key concept
- Demonstrating how to complete a problem
- Highlighting important information in the text or on a worksheet
- Supporting involvement in cooperative group activities
- Providing reminders to use the communication system and, as a conversation partner, also use the communication system when conversing
- Reading aloud a section of an assignment or textbook
- Demonstrating important classroom “survival skills”
- Explaining how to do certain aspects of an assignment
- Walking together from one class to the next

A Typical Peer Orientation

- Introduction
- Rational for peer support
- Background about each other
- General goals in the classroom
- Confidentiality and respectful language
- Expectations in and outside classroom
- Technology and communication systems
- Basic instructional and support strategies
- Student motivation and feedback
- When to seek assistance
- Questions



For More Information

www.kypeersupport.org

Contact the Low Incidence Consultant at your regional Special Education Cooperative for support in implementing Peer Support Arrangements and Peer Networks in your school!

<https://education.ky.gov/specialed/excep/advgroup/Pages/Kentucky's-Educational-Cooperatives-Special-Education-Services.aspx>

KY Peer Support Network Project

For more information about this statewide effort, check out the project website: <http://www.kypeersupport.org/>

The Kentucky Peer Support Network Project also has a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/kypeersupportnetwork?ref=hl>

