Supporting Social Relationships and Learning
The Power and Practice of Peer-Mediated Interventions

Reflection on Your School

• Where are the rigorous and relevant learning opportunities in your school and community for all students?

• What opportunities do all students have to develop valued relationships with their peers?

• How might we promote social interactions and shared learning within these existing activities for students with autism?

• What roles might peers, educators, and paraprofessionals play in this process?

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004)

(5) Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by—

(A) having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible, in order to—

(i) meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children; and

(ii) be prepared to lead productive and independent adult lives, to the maximum extent possible;
### Fostering Social Connections and Communication

1. Shared Activities
2. Communication Access
3. Proximity to Peers
4. Shared Interests & Motivation
5. Valued Roles
6. Prepared Peers
7. “Just Enough” Support
8. Data-Driven Reflection and Refinement

### A Few Promising Pathways We’ll Consider

- **Peer Network Strategies (non-instructional)**
- **Peer Support Arrangements (classroom)**
- **Peer Partner Programs (schoolwide)**

### Reflecting on...

**“four simple questions”**

- What are you doing well right now?
- What could you be doing better or more of?
- What should you be doing quite differently?
- What will you begin doing next semester to have the best impact at your school?

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### Table: Disability Category

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Disability category</th>
<th>Never visits with friends</th>
<th>Rarely or never receive telephone calls from friends</th>
<th>Not invited to other youth’s social activities during the past year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deaf-blindness</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<td>Hearing impairment</td>
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<td>Other health impairment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual impairment</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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Data Sources

• Observational Study of Elementary and Middle School Students Who Use AAC
  12 students, 64 full-class observations
  Chung, Carter, & Sisco (2012)

• Observational Study of High School Students in General Education, Special Education, and Other School Settings
  16 students, 320 10-min observations
  Carter, Hughes, Guth, & Copeland (2005)

• Observational Study of Middle and High School Students in General Education Classrooms (Academic and Elective)
  23 students, 152 full-class observations
  Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz (2008)

• Intervention Study of High School Students in Inclusive Academic and Elective General Education Classrooms
  150 students, 900 full-class observations
  Carter, Asmus, et al. (in press)

At Your School...

Are students with and without disabilities...

• ...present in the same places?

• ...there at the same times?

• ...engaged in the same activities?

Reflecting on Your School....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Same Place?</th>
<th>Same Time?</th>
<th>Same Activities?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria (during lunch)</td>
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<td>Hallways and Courtyard</td>
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<td>🤷</td>
<td>✋</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Classes</td>
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<td>School Clubs</td>
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<td>Extracurricular Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>✋</td>
<td>✋</td>
<td>✋</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A Picture of General Education Participation in Delaware... Same Place at the Same Time?

- **Intellectual Disability**
  - Mostly General Education: 11%
  - General and Special Education: 34%
  - Mostly Special Education: 43%
  - Elsewhere: 12%

- **Autism**
  - Mostly General Education: 11%
  - General and Special Education: 23%
  - Mostly Special Education: 43%
  - Elsewhere: 23%

Not Even Present In the Classroom...

- Large Group: 20%
- Small Group: 19%
- Independent: 18%
- No Instruction: 5%
- Gone: 39%

Source: Chung, Carter, & Sisco (2012)

2. Proximity to Peers

Number of peer interactions when students are NOT in proximity to peers

Average percentage of time students were in close enough proximity to peers to talk with one another

Source: Feldman, Carter, Asmus, & Brock (in press)
3. Communication Access

60% Average percentage of time students were NOT in proximity to their AAC device

Source: Chung, Carter, & Sisco (2012)

With Whom Do Students Interact?

- 93% Adults
- 5% Peers
- 2% Adults & Peers

Source: Chung, Carter, & Sisco (2012)

A Reliable Way to Communicate

- Do peers understand the ways in which messages are communicated when this AAC system is used?
- Does the form of AAC used by the student provide sufficient flexibility to be useful within a range of interaction contexts and settings?
- Does the student have consistent access to his or her device throughout the school day?
- Is the student supported to use the device to communicate with peers beyond the school day?

Source: Carter, Huber, & Biggs (2015)

4. Common Interests & Motivation

92% Percentage of students who wanted to keep spending time with their peer supports

Source: Carter & Asmus (2010-2014)
Common Interests

• What does she love to do for fun?
• What shows does she love to watch?
• What music does she love to listen to?
• What hobbies does she love to pursue?
• What sports does she love to follow?
• What places does she love to spend time?

• Who else in the school loves some of these very same things?
• Who else has some of these same passions (or “perseverations”)?

Common Interests & Motivation

Getting Everyone Involved
Identifying Transition Opportunities for Youth With Severe Disabilities

To Learn More: Swedeen, Carter, & Molfenter (2009)
Reflecting on the Roles We See Assigned

- "NOT "SO COOL"
- "WAY COOL"

To Download this Activity visit: http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/valuedroles.php

Group Discussion

- What roles were seen as less “cool”?
- What roles were seen as more “cool”?
- What does it depend on?
- What roles do young people with significant disabilities typically assume?

Potential Problem!!!
“Perpetual Helper” or “Designated Recipient”

Reflecting on Valued Roles

- Are students with disabilities participating in similar ways as their peers?
- Would the tasks done by students with disabilities be considered “cool” and “desirable” by their peers?
- Are students with disabilities contributing in ways that they choose for themselves?
- Are students with disabilities contributing in different roles over time?
- Does everyone have the opportunity to give and receive support?
- Would someone else need to do the task if students with disabilities were not doing it?

6. Prepared Peers
(and Students with Disabilities)

Source: Carter & Asmus (2010-2014)
Orienting and Equipping Students

- About one another
- About effective communication
- About shared activities
- About others who are involved (adults)
- About...

What might students with and without disabilities what to know to feel *comfortable* and *confident* in their interactions and shared work together?

7. “Just Enough” Support

Source: Chung, Carter, & Sisco (2012)

Are Students Academically Engaged?

Source: Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz (2008)
Interaction Rate by Instructional Arrangements

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<tr>
<th>Instructional Format</th>
<th>Core Academic</th>
<th>Elective Classes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Large Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Group</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-One</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Instruction</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz (2008)

Be Careful That Supports Do Not...

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

http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/reviews/giangreco37-5.pdf

Using the Most Natural Supports First

Can the student interact and participate...
- ...on his or her own?
- ...if given the right technology or adaptations?
- ...if provided additional skill instruction?
- ...if taught self-management strategies?
- ...with help from a peer partner or classmate?
- ...with occasional help from an educator?
- ...with ongoing help from an educator?

What tends to keep us toward the bottom of this list?

Some Potential 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
8. Data-Driven Reflection and Refinement

What impact do you expect these interventions to have?

What would look different if peer-mediated interventions went really well?

What could you point to that would suggest whether things were working as intended?

For students?
For peers?
For others in your school?

Are there people who...

- ...she can call/text/Instagram in the evening if she has a problem to discuss or exciting news to share?
- ...will invite her to a sleep-over or party?
- ...know when her birthday is and will make sure it is celebrated well?
- ...notice when she is not present at a school event and follow-up to find out why?
- ...take the initiative to call her and invite her to a shared activity?

Peer Support Arrangements

- Facilitate student participation in class activities
- Provide frequent feedback and encouragement
- Model communication and other skills
- Promote interaction with other classmates and device use
- Support progress related to IEP goals
- Address behavioral supports, as appropriate and appropriately***
Basic Steps...

- Identifying students with 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 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.

To Learn More About Peer Support Interventions...


Where Can You Learn More? (for free)


http://inclusiveeducationpdresources.com/peer-mentoring/
Peer Network Strategies

A social group established around a student with a disability that:
- Meets weekly to talk, participate in a shared activity, and plan/discuss interactions occurring outside of the group
- Helps the focus student become more involved in everyday school life and get connected to other school activities
- Receives regular guidance and support from an adult facilitator (e.g., coach, educator, paraprofessional)
- Lasts throughout an entire one semester

To Learn More: Carter, Asmus, Moss, et al. (2013)

Basic Steps...

- Identify interested students with a disability
- Identify a peer network facilitator (teacher, counselor, etc.)
- Identify and invite 3-6 peers to join the group
- Hold an initial orientation meeting with the peers
- Facilitate regular peer network meetings
  - Arrange a mutually enjoyable activity
  - Check in on weekly social contacts
  - Encourage expansion of the network
  - Provide ongoing feedback and support
- Reflect, fade, and maintain the network

To Learn More: Carter, Asmus, Moss, et al. (2013)

To Learn More About Peer Networks...


Launching Peer Support Arrangements

Where do you begin?
Implementing Peer Support Strategies

1. Planning for participation and supports

2. Recruiting peer supports

3. Equipping peers for their roles

4. Supporting students as they work together

5. Reflecting on the impact

6. Facilitating relationships beyond the classroom

To Learn More: Carter, Moss, Asmus, et al. (in press)

www.brookespublishing.com/carter

1. Planning for Participation and Supports

• What are all students expected to learn?

• What are the expectations general educators and club leaders hold for all students in this activity?

• What social, communication, and other IEP goals could the student work on here?

• How will the student be supported to participate in all of the learning and social opportunities that exist in this setting?

To Learn More: Carter, Moss, Asmus, et al. (in press)

Examples of Support Behaviors...

• Helping keep their assignments and class materials organized
• Reminding them how to follow established classroom routines
• Encouraging interactions with other classmates
• Helping them check the accuracy of their assignments and class work
• Sharing notes or assisting them to take complete guided notes
• Paraphrasing lectures or rephrasing key ideas
• Prompting them to answer a question or contribute an idea during class discussion
• Helping clarify a key concept
• Helping them self-direct their own learning and self-manage their own behavior
• Writing down answers given orally or using a communication device
• Helping them to pass out class materials
• Walking with them from one class to the next
• Offering additional examples of a concept or ideas
• Demonstrating how to complete a problem
• Highlighting important information in the text or on a worksheet
• Reviewing course content to ensure understanding

• Supporting involvement in cooperative group activities
• Teaching leisure and recreational activities during non-instructional times
• Helping them to “fit in” by learning accepted social norms
• Motivating and encouraging them when they get frustrated
• Prompting them to use their communication book
• Exchanging advice related to a personal problem
• Sharing class materials
• Reading aloud a section of an assignment or textbook
• Redirecting them when they are off-task
• Inviting them to work together on a class project
• Showing them important classroom “survival skills”
• Reinforcing communication attempts
• Explaining how to do certain aspects of an assignment
• Writing down answers given verbally or when using communication device
• Helping student pass out class materials
• Reminding the student to follow established classroom routines
• Encouraging interactions with other students in the
1. Planning for Participation and Supports [PN]

- What social-related goals does the student already have on her IEP or elsewhere?
- Which of those goals will we focus on as part of the peer network? For example:
  - Does the student interact more successfully with adults than peers?
  - Does the student initiate interactions?
  - Does the student use her communication device?
  - Are interactions balanced and reciprocal?
  - Are conversational topics appropriate and engaging?
- How will the student be supported to participate in her peer network?
2. Recruiting Peers

- Which peers share interests, hobbies, or activities in common with the student?
- Which peers have shown an interest in getting to know the focus student in the past?
- Which peers have consistent attendance?
- Who would model positive behaviors for the student?
- Who has good interpersonal skills?
- Which peers are themselves "on the margins"?
- Which peers are part of a larger friendship networks?
- Which peers have common time available with the student with a disability during the school day?

Avenues for Identifying Peer Partners (PS)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Drawbacks</th>
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<td>Class announcements</td>
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<td>Teacher recommendations</td>
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<td>Peers from other settings</td>
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<td>Extracurricular groups</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Formal peer partner groups</td>
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</table>

A Few Other Ideas...

- Have a panel on inclusion at an assembly
- Host a pizza party
- Hold a pancake breakfast
- Have a video screening of *Including Samuel*
- Plan an inclusive field trip
- Host a booth at orientation for students and parents
- Have a float in the Homecoming Parade
- Create a short video for Channel One
- Host a fun social event and invite students
Example Questions for Prospective Peer Supports

• How well do you already know _____?
• What interests you most about becoming a peer partner?
• What expectations do you have?
• Why do you think it takes to be an effective peer partner?
• Are there aspects of the experience you are worried about?
• What other school and community activities are you involved in?
• What experiences have you had that you feel would make you a good peer partner?
• What questions do you have about this role?
• What do you hope to gain from this experience?
• Have you ever received support from your classmates? Describe the experience.

3. Orienting Peer Partners [PS]

• 40-60 min orientation meeting
• During lunch, before/after school, advisory, “down time”
• Ongoing monitoring and support from paraprofessionals, special educators, and/or general educators

Questions to Consider

• Who will lead the orientation session?
• When and where will the session be held?
• What topics will be addressed?
• Which students will be encouraged to attend?
• How many students will be trained at once?

Example Orientation Discussion Topics

• Introductions
• Rationale for peer-mediated strategies
• Background about the student
• General goals in the class, club, or other activity
• Confidentiality and respectful language
• Expectations specific to the classroom or elsewhere
• Technology and communication systems
• Basic instructional and support strategies
• Student motivation and feedback
• When to seek assistance
• Questions

3. An Example Orientation [PN]

• Introductions and “ice breaker”
• Discuss the goals and structure of the group
• Address what group members have in common, as well as what makes each person unique
• Discuss confidentiality and respectful language
• Plan “out-of-meeting” connections
• Schedule regular meetings for the semester
• Closing and questions
Other Topics You Might Address

• A general overview of the social-related goals of the focus student
• Description and modeling of basic communication and social support strategies
• Emphasis on the importance of maintaining privacy/confidentiality and using respectful language
• Ideas for how to interact with someone who uses different communication modes
• Suggestions for how students might connect with one another outside of meetings
• Guidance on when to seek assistance from the facilitator
• Any other expectations specific to being part of this peer network

4. Supporting Students as They Work Together

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

• Modeling ways for students to initiate, maintain, and extend conversations
• Demonstrating how to converse with someone using an augmentative or alternative communication devices
• Highlighting shared interests, strengths, experiences, or other similarities among students
• Teaching and prompting critical social interaction skills (e.g., greeting classmates, requesting help, refusing support)
• Redirecting peers’ questions and comments away from the adult and to the student with disabilities (and vice versa)

Facilitation Strategies (continued)

• Interpreting the communicative intent of particular behaviors, as well as suggesting appropriate responses
• Highlighting students’ strengths and contributions to small-group and other projects
• Assigning classroom responsibilities requiring frequent interaction, such as small-group assignments and cooperative projects
• Ensuring students sit together and remain in close physical and social proximity
• Asking specific peers to provide particular support

Sources: Causton-Theoharis & Malmgren, 2005; Downing, 2005; Ghere, York-Barr, & Sommerness, 2002

A Couple of Great Articles to Share with Paras

http://www.kcdsg.org/files/content/Golden%20Rule.pdf

Roles During Peer Network Meetings [PN]

• Determine how the student’s social goal will be addressed
• Ensure an appropriate activity is planned
• Encourage the student and peers to attend meetings
• Be present during meetings and ensure everyone is included and participating
• Check in with the group and answer any questions
• Encourage members to connect with each other outside of the meetings
• After each meeting, reflect and make adjustments as needed
• Complete the optional Peer Network Weekly Checklist
• Provide feedback to the peers and student outside of the meeting
Selecting Network Activities [PN]

- Be age-appropriate (e.g., instead of coloring cartoons, make posters for events)
- Be interesting to all members and can possibly include a student’s “perseverative” interests (if appropriate)
- Have a (valued) role for everyone
- Provide multiple opportunities for interaction
- Allow interaction modes appropriate for the student
- Be practical to implement in the location and available time

Classroom Observations

- Inititations, responses, and social interactions
- Augmentative and alternative communication system use
- Appropriateness and relevance of conversation topics
- Affect of the student and his or her peers
- Proximity of peers and adults to the student
- Social supports exchanged by the student and his/her peers
- Individualized education program goal progress
- Reciprocity of interactions
- Social and communication skill use
- People involved in social interactions
- Perceived quality of interactions
- Social participation
- Academic engagement

“"You can observe a lot by watching.””
-Yogi Berra

5. Reflecting on the Impact of Peer Supports

Peer Partner Project Study Participants

- **146** high school students with severe disabilities
  - Students who (a) have a primary or secondary label of intellectual disability or autism, (b) are enrolled in at least one general education class with some adult support, or (c) have been eligible for the alternate assessment or have a moderate/severe intellectual disability.
  - 68% European American, 14% African American, 5% Asian American, 3% Latino/a, 9% other ethnicities
  - 36% female, 64% male
- **298** peers without disabilities
  - 74% European American, 9% African American, 4% Asian American, 5% Latino/a, 5% other ethnicities
  - 69% female, 31% male
- Average grades of peer partners: 66% As, 21% Bs, 9% Cs, 2% Ds, 3% Fs

M = 2.1 (range, 1-4)
M = 4.0 (range, 3-6)
All Peer Interactions [PS]

Carter, Asmus, et al. (in press)

Classroom Observations (Post) [PS]

p < .001
ES: 0.42

p = .005
ES: 0.34

Academic Engagement [PS]

Adult Proximity [PS]
Gone from the Classroom [PS]

<table>
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<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<td>Peer Supports</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>-20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typical</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Classroom Observations (Post) [PS]

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<tr>
<th>Percentage of Class Period</th>
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A Few Other Measures (at Post) [PS]

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Related GAS</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic-Related GAS</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recent Social Contact and Friendship Gains [PS]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Peers without Disabilities Added</th>
<th>Peer Supports</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-School</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Contacts</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-School</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One Semester and One Year Later... [PS]

40% Had a Social Contact (in 2-week window)

43% Reported as Friends

40% Reported as Friends

One Semester Later

One Year Later

When Teachers Equip Parapros [PS]

Brock, Biggs, et al. (in press)

Peer Network Implementation [PN]

Asmus, Carter, et al. (submitted)
**Recent Social Contact and Friendship Gains [PN]**

![Bar chart showing recent social contact and friendship gains for Peer Network and Control groups.](chart1.png)

- **In-School**
  - Peer Network: 4 new peers added (ES: 1.39, p < .001)
  - Control: 1 new peer added (ES: 1.39, p < .001)

- **Out-of-School**
  - Peer Network: 2 new peers added (ES: .25, p = .20)
  - Control: 2 new peers added (ES: .28, p = .20)

**One Semester and One Year Later...**

- **33%** Had a Social Contact (in 2-week window)
- **20%** Had a Social Contact (in 2-week window)
- **41%** Reported as Friends
- **28%** Reported as Friends

**In an Advisory Class [PN]**

![Graph showing percentage of intervals in which focus students were socially engaged with peers and interacting socially with peers.](chart2.png)

Hochman, Carter, et al. (in press)
In an Advisory Class [PN]

Gardner, Carter, et al. (2014)

**Results**

Social Engagement

Active and passive engagement outcomes are displayed in Figure 1. Mean percentages of all engagement codes are displayed in Table 3. For both participants, the mean percentage of intervals during which the focus student was actively or passively engaged was substantially higher when the peer network was in place. For Anton, the mean percentage of active engagement increased from 4% during the baseline phase to 68% during the intervention phase. The mean percentage decreased to 11% when the intervention was withdrawn and increased to 56% when the peer network was reintroduced. For Anton, there was minimal variability during the baseline phase, but high variability during the intervention and withdrawal phases. No data overlap was found between the baseline and intervention phases, only 17% of data overlapped between the intervention and withdrawal phases, and 20% of data overlapped between the withdrawal phase and reintroduction of the peer network.

George's mean percentage of active engagement increased from 10% during the baseline phase to 50% during the intervention phase and decreased to 14% when the peer network was withdrawn. George's active and passive engagement was somewhat variable across all phases. Although there was 25% overlap between baseline and the intervention and 67% overlap between the intervention and withdrawal, this was primarily due to one data point in the intervention phase (i.e., Session 25). During this particular session, George became upset and exhibited problem behaviors (i.e., elopement, crying, hitting). Subsequently, his partners were not able to meet with him for the majority of the session.

**Conversations with Students with Disabilities**

- Are you enjoying spending time with _____? Why or why not?
- What are some of the things you do together?
- What help do you find most helpful? Least helpful?
- What have you learned from working with _____?
- Do you consider _____ to be a friend?
- Would you like to continue working with _____? Why or why not?

**Student Feedback Form**

Name: ____________________
Semester: __________________

1. What did you like about spending time with your peer partners?
2. What did you not like about spending time with your peer partners?
3. Would you like to continue spending time with your peer partners?
4. Have you made new friends? Who?
5. What other types of support would you like to receive?
6. What other school activities would you like to be part of?
7. Are there other students in the school you would like to get to know?

Other Comments or Feedback:

**Students with Disabilities Feedback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example Questions</th>
<th>Peer Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have friends at school?</td>
<td>90% yes, 4% no, 2% unsure, 4% unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you like spending time with your peer partners?</td>
<td>94% yes, 2% unsure, 4% unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are _____ [names of peer partners] your friends?</td>
<td>94% yes, 2% unsure, 4% unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to keep hanging out with ____ [names of peer partners]?</td>
<td>92% yes, 4% unsure, 4% unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversations with Peers Providing Support

• How would you describe your experiences?
• Did you enjoy serving in this role? In what ways?
• What things have been going really well? Not so well?
• In what ways have you benefited from this involvement?
• What changes have you noticed in your partner, if any?
• Has this been a beneficial experience for your partner?
• What additional help would you like to be effective in this role?

Conversations with Students with Disabilities

• Are you enjoying spending time with _____? Why or why not?
• What are some of the things you do together?
• What help do you find most helpful? Least helpful?
• What have you learned from working with _____?
• Do you consider _____ to be a friend?
• Would you like to continue working with _____? Why or why not?
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- In what ways have you benefited from this involvement?
- What changes have you noticed in your partner, if any?
- Has this been a beneficial experience for your partner?
- What additional help would you like to be effective in this role?

Conversations with Educators and Paraprofessionals

- What is your overall impression of peer support strategies?
- How would you describe the experiences of students?
- How effective have peers been at providing support?
- What strategies do these peers still need to learn?
- What concerns (if any) do you still have?
- What sort of assistance would be most helpful for you?
- What have been the benefits to students with disabilities? To their peer partners? To other students? To school staff?
Conversations with Parents

- What does your child tell you about working with his or her peers in this classroom?
- What have you noticed that suggests your child is enjoying this experience?
- Does your child describe his or her peers as friends?
- Is your child connecting with his peers outside of school, by phone, e-mail, or in person?

Other Markers of Impact

- Are your students spending more time in inclusive classrooms?
- Are your students connected to more clubs and extracurriculars?
- Are more staff connected to students with significant disabilities?
- Are more resources available to support rigor, relevance, and relationships?
- Is the culture of your school becoming more welcoming and inclusive?

6. Facilitating Interactions Beyond the Classroom

“Formal efforts to create more welcoming school cultures, expand the quality of opportunities students with and without disabilities have to get to know and spend time with one another, and strengthen the social skills and friendships of all students”

Peer Partner Programs
Peer Partner Programs

1. Laying the Groundwork
2. Identifying Students
3. Equipping Students to Support and Spend Time with Each Other
4. Connecting at Regular Meetings or Events
5. Sustaining and Expanding the Program

www.brookespublishing.com/carter
http://www.kypeertutoring.org

A Few Themes From This Work...

- **Relationships** matter!!!
- **Relationships** require support
- **How** matters as much as **where**
- Good support strategies should be good for **everyone**
- Doing things **differently** doesn't always require more resources
- Strategies should be effective and feasible