

Peer Supports for Inclusive Schools

Elementary School (K-5)

What it Could Look Like?

Peer Supports in Elementary Education (K-5)

- To increase the future success of inclusion, exposure and instruction must start early
 - ❖ In the classroom
 - ❖ On the playground
- Attitude is the key to fostering acceptance and creating "natural supports".

Start Small

- Lunch
- Circle Time – Don't designate "peer", use classroom weekly helpers
- Centers
- Special Classes
 - ❖ Art
 - ❖ PE
 - ❖ Music



Start Small

- ESE and General Education staff model support strategies
- Have two or three students with disabilities "push in" to a specific general education class

Micro Society

- Once a week have specific activities occurring simultaneously in four separate general education classes
 - ❖ Computers
 - ❖ Postmaster
 - ❖ Board games
 - ❖ Cooking
- Students with and without disabilities choose which activity to participate in

Benefits for Students With and Without Disabilities

- Pair upper grade students with lower grade students
- Students work on lower level skills with younger students while reinforcing their own skill level
 - ❖ Basic sight words
 - ❖ Fact families
 - ❖ Sequencing
 - ❖ Backwards counting
 - ❖ Basic concepts

In the Classroom

- Cooperative learning
 - Cooperative learning is a teaching arrangement that refers to small, heterogeneous groups of students working together to achieve a common goal. Students work together to learn and are responsible for their teammates' learning as well as their own.
 - ❖ Partner reading
 - ❖ Jigsaw
 - ❖ Team Group Roles

In the Classroom

- Direct instruction of social skills
 - ❖ Interactions with students with severe disabilities tend to be less reinforcing for peers
 - ❖ Initiation must be taught but don't stop there!
 - Teach strategies to continue interactions including verbal and nonverbal cues, conversational routines, and turn taking
 - Role play

In the Classroom

- Integrated Play Groups
- Play groups should be strategically organized with “expert” and “novice” players paired according to temperament, age, interests, ability, development, and primary language

In the Classroom

- Peer training
 - ❖ Ability awareness – All students should be taught about specific disabilities.
 - ❖ Students should be taught how to recognize, respond to and maintain initiations

Specials

- Instead of a general education student going to art, PE, or music, they can choose to be a peer in a general education math class where a student with a disability is “pushed in”
 - ❖ Teachers should have a pre-planned activity for the peer to assist with

On the Playground

- Ensure that structured activities are prepared where all students can participate successfully
 - ❖ Scavenger hunts, facilitated activities, physical games

On the Playground

- In elementary education, teachers are still cool!
 - ❖ Involve yourself in children's play to create interest
 - ❖ Facilitate and extend play so that all students have a valuable role
 - ❖ Make a plan for play to continue, assign jobs and responsibilities
 - ❖ Check in periodically

In the School – Outcomes

- Creating an accepting and helping environment
- Direct instruction of social skills
- Integrated play
- Ability awareness

Middle and High School

What does Peer Support look like at Central High School?

In the Beginning

- Representatives from Florida Inclusion Network, the Hernando County ESE Director, and a Professor from the University of Florida shared a dream with the principal at West Hernando Middle School

In the Beginning

- In depth planning required
- Shared relevant research based data
- Started small – three students with significant disabilities
- Needed to get “buy in”
 - ❖ Met with students, parents, and staff

In the Beginning - CHS

- Planning meeting involving Florida Inclusion Network, ESE Director and Coordinator, Principal, and Assistant Principal
 - ❖ Students from WHMS were transitioning to CHS
 - ❖ Talk about supporting research
 - ❖ Gave a synopsis of what the program would look like
 - ❖ ESE Department was willing to allocate a Peer Support Facilitator
 - ❖ Principal would not commit without visible district support throughout the school year
- Planning meetings continued for six months prior to implementation

Progress at Central High School

School Year	Students with Disabilities Supported Full-Time
2007 – 2008 (1 facilitator)	5
2008 – 2009 (2 facilitators)	16
2009 – 2010 (2 facilitators)	22
2010-2011 (1 facilitator)	15

- Caseload – responsible for IEP's
- Typically have at least 5 out of 7 classes in general ed.
- May have ESE classes for health or personal needs
- May have state mandated special diploma class such as self-determination and/or career prep

Progress at Central High School

School Year	Students with Disabilities Supported for One or Two Classes
2007 – 2008 (1 facilitator)	0
2008 – 2009 (2 facilitators)	52
2009 – 2010 (2 facilitators)	65
2010-2011 (1 facilitator)	61

- These students are typically separate or self-contained
- Based on interests, they may participate in an elective
 - Culinary Arts, Graphic Design, Music, Art, PE, Auto, Health, Chorus, Agriculture, Band, Child Development

Costs Involved...NONE

- There are no costs involved in implementing Peer Support
 - ❖ Peers can provide their own 3-ring binder to be used as their Tracking Log
 - ❖ Students with disabilities can provide their own marble composition book to be used for the Peer/Parent Log

Costs Involved...NONE

- Raise money for activities by:
 - ❖ Car Washes (also provides for social opportunities for all students)
 - ❖ Fundraisers – brochure sale, sold T-shirts
 - ❖ Target field trip grant – Rays game
- Money is used for field trips and end-of-the-year celebrations

Which Students with Disabilities are Eligible to Participate?
All of them!!

- Always ask the student if they want a peer
- Student, parent, teacher, and staff may recommend specific students
- Seek and find

How Does a Student Become a Peer?

- Sign up for the elective class
 - ❖ Exploratory Teaching
 - ❖ Peer Counseling
- Peer must have good attendance
- No application, parent permission form, or recommendation necessary

How to Solicit Peers?

- Students elect to take course
- Guidance counselors suggest course to students
- School Announcement and Infomercials?

How to pair students with disabilities with peers?

- Best Practice – Let elective teachers look at potential peers to identify those that were previously successfully in their classes.
- Ask peers about their strengths and interests
 - ❖ A peer with computer skills will be paired with a student taking web design.
 - ❖ A peer who has already taken culinary will be paired with student who is scheduled for culinary.

How to pair students with disabilities with peers?

- If the peer has a learning disability, they should be paired in class with less academic requirements
 - ❖ Instead of going to English, they may be more successful going to art or PE

How to pair students with disabilities with peers?

- Be mindful of individual student needs such as
 - ❖ Fred responds better to males than females
 - ❖ George does better with a firm, outspoken peer
 - ❖ Leroy enjoys weightlifting with Curt instead of Sally

How to pair students with disabilities with peers?

- Student, parent, teacher, staff request
 - ❖ May have had classes together in the past
 - ❖ Family friend
 - ❖ Experience with a particular disability

Paraprofessionals – A Changing Role

- Strategically schedule students with adult assistants in classes that include one other student with a disability.
- Utilize paraprofessionals in the classroom as needed
 - ❖ The student with a disability has a peer to assist him/her for specific tasks
 - ❖ Less stigma with peer support

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

- Curricular planning
- Establish schedules and routines
- Model in-class support strategies
- Train peers to deliver in-class supports
- Provide instructional activities for course work
- Monitor and document student progress

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

- Develop and monitor communication
 - ❖ Parents
 - ❖ Peers
 - ❖ Teachers
 - ❖ Administrators

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

- Model how to work with the student who has a disability.
 - ❖ Classroom routines
 - ❖ Communication
 - ❖ Modification of materials
 - ❖ Classroom participation

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

- Complete a Matrix, Ecological Assessment, and Student Profile for each student with a disability.
 - ❖ These forms are given to General Education Teachers, Parents, Peers, all staff involved with the student.

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

- Matrix
 - ❖ Completed for each student with a disability
 - ❖ Includes current IEP goals
 - ❖ Includes current class schedule
 - ❖ The grid is marked to show where IEP goals may be addressed throughout the school day

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

• Matrix

Role	Actual	S. Amy B. Joshi	S. Jay B. Gohla Michael Cathy P.	S. Jay C. Liu Kiana G.	S. Jay D. Kumar Michael Kiana W.	S. Jay E. Sreen	S. Jay F. Bark Kevin K.	S. Jay G. Sai Rangan Sudhansu B.	S. Jay H. Sudhansu Sreen M.	Coach	Observer
1. Discuss students with a like level											
2. Assess comprehension questions on Microsoft Math: Choice											
3. Create cards											
4. Create 100-page essay											
5. Prepare questions in classmate class											
6. Prepare questions in Elective class											

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

• Ecological Assessment

- ❖ Completed for each student
- ❖ On one side, list typical classroom routines and activities
- ❖ On the other side, state how student with a disability and peer can meaningfully participate in these routines and activities

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

Ecological Assessment of Classroom Activities
 Teacher **O'Rourke** Grade **9** Student **Bryan**
 Subject **Algebra IA** Period **3rd** Date **8/8/12/07**

<p>1. Do Now</p> <p>2. Journal HW</p> <p>3. Homework</p> <p>4. Student Present</p> <p>5. Problem Solving</p> <p>6. Student Present</p> <p>7. Student Present</p> <p>8. Student Present</p> <p>9. Student Present</p> <p>10. Student Present</p>	<p>1. Do Now</p> <p>2. Journal HW</p> <p>3. Homework</p> <p>4. Student Present</p> <p>5. Problem Solving</p> <p>6. Student Present</p> <p>7. Student Present</p> <p>8. Student Present</p> <p>9. Student Present</p> <p>10. Student Present</p>
<p>11. Student Present</p> <p>12. Student Present</p> <p>13. Student Present</p> <p>14. Student Present</p> <p>15. Student Present</p>	<p>11. Student Present</p> <p>12. Student Present</p> <p>13. Student Present</p> <p>14. Student Present</p> <p>15. Student Present</p>

Peer Support Facilitator Roles

- Complete a positive student profile for each student with a disability. Profile should include:
 - ❖ Age, grade, disability, how disability effects life, likes, dislikes, how to present material, family background, personality traits, etc.

Beginning the School Year

- Follow state standards for Exploratory Teaching / Peer Counseling
- Distribute Materials
 - ❖ Syllabus
 - ❖ Tracking Log Binders
 - Peers mark off what strategies they use to assist the student with a disability in class. For example: hand over/under hand, highlighter, read aloud, take notes, asked questions, re-explain, etc.

Beginning the School Year

- Distribute Materials - Continued
 - ❖ Peer/Parent Logs
 - Peers write to the parent/family of the student they are paired with each time they have class together. Entries may include what they did in class, how they spent their weekend, what is going on in school, etc. This is an on-going communication between the peer and the family of the student they are paired with. The Peer/Parent Log is a means of communication between home and school. The peers are required to write in the log, however, not all parents write back.

Beginning the School Year

- Pair each peer with a student with a disability
 - ❖ Give peer Matrix for the student they are paired with
 - ❖ Give Positive Student Profile
 - ❖ Ecological assessment is completed by support facilitator during the first few weeks of school. Once completed it is distributed to parents, peers, and all staff involved with the student.

Grading the Peers

- Nine week grades are based on
 - ❖ Tracking Logs 20%
 - Peer completes at the end of each class
 - ❖ Ability Awareness Assignments 20%
 - One assignment due every week
 - ❖ Participation 25%
 - Rubric completed by gen. ed. teachers
 - ❖ Quarterly Projects 35%
 - Given each quarter

Grading Students with Disabilities

- Technical Assistance Paper 2006-11 from FLDOE – Key Recommendations for Teachers (pages 10-11)
 - ❖ Compare student performance to learning criteria (SSS)
 - ❖ Give separate grades for academic achievement and behavior, effort, and participation
 - ❖ Be clear about the purposes of the assessments

Grading Students with Disabilities

- Classroom teacher and/or co-teacher grade all assignments
 - ❖ Assignments/activities are typically aligned with IEP goals as noted on Matrix

Credits

- The student with a disability attends general education classes such as Algebra I, and English 9
- Student receives credit for ESE courses such as Math 9-12, and English 9-12

Classroom Attendance

- Peers and Students with Disabilities
 - ❖ The general education teacher is responsible for taking and reporting attendance.
 - Separate attendance sheet is given to classroom teachers for peers.
 - Student enrolled in the general education class is on the teacher's class roster.

Peer Support is NOT a Service

- Peer Support should not be listed on the IEP as an ESE service.
- It can be noted in the minutes that the student is supported in certain classes through peer support.

Modifying Assignments and Assessments

- Modifications must be done in a clear, uncluttered format
- Prompts for identifying key information (highlighted or underlined words)
- Clear directions
- Carefully constructed items
- Accommodations as needed

Modifying Assignments and Assessments

- Fill-in-the-Blank Items
 - ❖ Use word banks
 - ❖ Adjust line length (equal or proportional) test not test
 - ❖ Provide first letter of missing word

Modifying Assignments and Assessments

- Accommodations for test or worksheet items
 - ❖ Fewer test items
 - ❖ Fewer response choices (multiple choice)
- Supports (calculator, book, notes, highlighter)
- For many students, the purpose is not memorization of facts or information, it is being able to comprehend and respond to information being presented.

Peer Floaters

- In order to address peer absences, a floater schedule should be developed for each period of the day.
- Floaters should be trustworthy and versatile

Training

- One 90 minute training each nine weeks
- Topics
 - ❖ Specific Disabilities
 - ❖ Communication Skills
 - ❖ People First Language
 - ❖ Behavior Management
 - ❖ Presumed Competence
 - ❖ Least Dangerous Assumption
 - ❖ Modification of assignments
- “On the job training”

Training

- Peers working with a student with a communication device will learn how to use that specific device
 - ❖ They will attend a training session presented by Assistive Technology Staff or Peer Support Facilitators

Extracurricular Activities

- Homecoming
 - ❖ Tailgate party, football game, dance
- Prom
- Countywide Autism Walk
- Dances sponsored by The ARC
 - ❖ 5-7 themed dances held in the evening
- End-of-the-Year Celebration
 - ❖ 2008 – Social gathering, trip to Rays baseball game funded by grant
 - ❖ 2009, 2010 & 2011 – Weeki Wachee Springs State Park
 - Pizza, Food, Swimming, Fun

Focus on Membership and Participation

- The student with a disability and their peer should NOT be sitting in the back of the science class coloring a plant cell while the rest of the class is reading the chapter and taking notes.
- Student with a disability uses the same materials.
- Student and peer should have separate copies of all materials.

Outcomes

- Improved quality of life for all.
 - ❖ Students with disabilities
 - Exposure to general education curriculum
 - Increased academic gains
 - Opportunities to become members of typical high school social interactions and activities
 - ❖ Families
 - ❖ Peer Support students
 - ❖ Staff

Outcomes

- Increased student and staff awareness of people with disabilities.
 - ❖ Compassion
 - ❖ Empathy
 - ❖ Diversity
 - ❖ Respect
 - ❖ etc.

Contact

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
 - Margaret Mead
