The Power of Peers

A Guide to Developing a Peer Support Program for Students with Disabilities

www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com
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Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Bambi Lockman, Bureau Chief

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The Power of Peers

A Guide to Developing a Peer Support Program for Students with Disabilities

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Introduction

Students: Our Most Valuable Resource
Florida students with disabilities, particularly those with more significant disabilities, face many challenges to taking part in the school community. Students with disabilities may require extra help with the regular education curriculum, with transitions from activity to activity, and in dealing with social issues and peer pressure. The conventional model for providing the extra help needed by these students is to use exceptional student education (ESE) teachers, paraprofessionals, and other support personnel. But while the model is effective, using paid adults as the only option for support can be limiting for several reasons.

One reason is that, although students with disabilities need qualified personnel and services, they may not always require the services of specialized professionals. Inclusive education presents many challenges for special education staff as they try to support students with complex schedules and needs. Utilizing all available resources is a necessity for most schools.

Another reason is that “adult-reliant” support models can actually increase the isolation and dependency of students with disabilities, especially those with moderate to severe disabilities. When adults hover around a student, it can be a barrier to relationships with same-aged peers without disabilities.

Support from adults in the school is by definition a temporary service. The goal for all students, with and without disabilities, is to become independent. How will students with disabilities manage their lives when they leave school? Learning how to access natural supports and develop positive relationships with peers is an important part of the answer.

How can schools meet the increased need to support students with disabilities in inclusive settings? One cost-effective, natural and underutilized answer is PEERS: students providing support to students with disabilities.

Students with and without disabilities can benefit from a formal peer support program. Research shows these programs can lead to (a) higher student achievement, (b) increased self-esteem, (c) improved behavior, (d) increased attendance, and, most importantly, (e) the development of positive relationships between students with and without disabilities in the school and community.

A peer support program benefits staff as well. General education teachers say they spend less time assisting students with routine tasks, such as following directions, staying on task, and writing homework assignments. Special education personnel say the peer support programs let them use time more effectively to help students and general education colleagues through planning, consulting, and co-teaching.
Although the research data are important, educators, parents, and students find that many benefits are beyond measure. Students serving as peer assistants are finding new meaning in school activities, even students at-risk of dropping out of school. Students with disabilities are finding increased acceptance and understanding at school. Using peers to support one another creates a cooperative classroom community where all students have value and rely on one another.

The story of Terrell is happily typical of what a peer support program can do. Terrell is 13 years old and has cerebral palsy and mental retardation. Terrell cannot speak and uses a laptop computer for communicating, but he had few opportunities to use it with the other students in his self-contained classroom. His teachers felt that in the general education classroom, he could take part in more of the regular curriculum and increase his social interactions. But the support he needed was more than the general education teachers could provide.

The answer was to match him with peers in each of his six classes, with periodic help from his ESE teacher. The peers did some reading for him, took notes for him, and reminded him of what he was supposed to be doing. They took on this responsibility as part of an elective class where they also learned about disability issues and how to carry out support in a scientific way. The effect on Terrell was tremendous. He started using his communication device regularly to communicate with classmates and to take part in class discussions. He kept up with assignments and did well on modified tests.

But the best picture of success might be seen in Terrell’s transitions between classes. There is Terrell moving through the noisy exuberance of the middle school hallway in his motorized wheelchair, his peer assistant by his side. They wave to classmates, friends lean over to share a joke or piece of news. From relative isolation, Terrell has moved into the life of his school. It has benefited him and his classmates both. And it was made possible by a well-planned peer support program.

Elementary and secondary schools throughout Florida are tapping into the power of peers to help students with disabilities benefit from inclusive education. This guide is for educators and families who want to start a peer support program in their own school. All materials found in this guide are included in the accompanying CD. Section 1 describes the contents of the guide.

For more information on starting a peer support program on your campus, please contact your local Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) facilitator by visiting the FIN website, www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com, and clicking on “About Us,” then clicking on “Our Staff” to find the facilitator for your district. Your FIN facilitator can provide you with current information, planning assistance, and ongoing support needed to make the peer support program successful in your school!
Using This Guide

Section 1:  This section describes the resources in the guide and how to use them. This guide has been designed to assist education teams in the design and implementation of peer support programs in schools throughout Florida. While a peer support program may be new to your school, there is nothing new about students helping students. The peer support program simply formalizes the idea. This guide provides you with a process and materials to create a peer support program in your school. You are encouraged to adapt these materials for your own situation.

A peer support program matches students with disabilities with peers who assist them during instructional and noninstructional activities throughout the day. Students may be paired for cooperative learning, group projects, or activities. Peer assistants can be almost any age, from any social, ethnic, or cultural background. They do not have to be the best students. In fact, peer assistants with academic or social problems have been known to blossom as they learn to help fellow students with disabilities. A good peer assistant has empathy, patience, commitment, and a desire to help others.

The first step in planning a peer support program on your campus is to find partners. People who might be interested include guidance counselors, special education teachers, general education teachers, paraprofessionals, support services personnel, vocational or electives teachers, administrators, and parents. Your team could be as small as two people. A general education teacher and a special education teacher might make a good pair. It is better to have a small committed group than a larger one that won’t be able to last for the long haul. However, it is not a good idea for one person to try to develop a program alone.

This guide takes you through the process of developing a peer support program independently. However, we hope you will make use of the Florida Inclusion Network in the process. Representatives from FIN can help you organize your team and provide valuable resources to help you get started. FIN can arrange for visits to schools with successful peer support programs, can provide staff training, and may even provide stipends to compensate staff for the extra time needed at the beginning of the program.
Section 2: This section is the “facilitator’s guide” for training your peer support program team. Make sure to give adequate time and attention to section 2. It provides a detailed outline of training sessions for the facilitator to use, as well as instructions for team building exercises to introduce each session. Even if your team has been through the FIN training on peer supports, it is a good idea to review this material. This section contains the PowerPoint slides for use in team training. These can also be printed as overheads if that is more convenient for you.

Section 3: This section provides a detailed description of each program development step. There is also a useful planning chart for your team to use.

Section 4: This section provides ideas for peer assistant training, including a training outline, content, and timeframes.

Section 5: This Section has appendices that include samples of forms, letters, and documentation tools, along with other critical information designed to facilitate successful implementation of the program.

Section 6: This section contains recommended resources and references to help with your peer support program.

You don’t need to reinvent the peer support wheel. There are many resources in Florida and nationally to help you learn of the challenges and successes in other programs. The Florida Inclusion Network is ready to be your partner in this effort.

Visit the FIN website to find the contact person for your district:
www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com
This section is the “facilitator’s guide” for training your peer support program team. Make sure to give adequate time and attention to section 2. It provides a detailed outline of training sessions for the facilitator to use, as well as instructions for team building exercises to introduce each session. Even if your team has been through the FIN training on peer supports, it is a good idea to review this material.

This section contains the PowerPoint slides for use in team training. Slides can be used with a computer and LCD projector or may be printed as overhead transparencies. A set of slides “at-a-glance” are also provided for facilitator planning purposes.
This section provides your team with an overview of the peer support program, including a history of inclusion and guidelines, procedures, and outcomes for the program. If the team has attended a FIN-sponsored training on developing a Peer Support Program, reviewing this material together will be helpful. If the team has not attended peer support training, you have several options. One is to have a FIN facilitator come and guide you through the material. This is a free service and takes about three hours. A second option for your team is to use a “study group” to read and discuss the content of the PowerPoint slides together. A third option is to have someone in your school or district serve as a facilitator. Staff development personnel or guidance counselors can use the outline and presentation materials to carry out your team training. The training outline provides options for doing the training in a three-hour session, or in three one-hour sessions, depending on which fits your schedule best.

All members of your team should take part in the teambuilding activities at the beginning of each training session. These activities are good icebreakers and also get the team talking about issues of inclusion and differences. Later, during the peer assistant training, students will be doing these same activities, so it is very helpful if the adults are familiar them. We recommend that each team training session and peer assistant training session begin with one of these activities.

Please note that each one-hour training session includes time for team members to work together to develop a Program Implementation Plan. Detailed steps for completing this plan can be found in section 3.

### Team Training Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Content/Purpose/Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5 min. | • Review agenda.  
• Use “Two Truths and a Lie” activity to provide team introductions, discuss change, and build the team.  
• Debrief activity. | *PowerPoint slides can be viewed with an LCD projector or printed as overhead transparencies.*  
PowerPoint slides 1-5  
3” x 5” card for each person; pencil or pen |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content/Purpose/Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>• Provide overview of inclusion.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides 6-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce peer support program: definition, benefits, pilot program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review program development getting started.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>• Review <em>Implementation Plan</em> (IP) development and steps 1-5.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides 25-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>• Teams complete <em>IP</em> step 2: Vision statement; modify and adapt to fit your school.</td>
<td><em>Implementation Plan</em> form (Section 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create core beliefs, guiding principles, and a program title (time permitting, or assign as “homework” for the team).</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 39, 3” x 5” Post-It® notes, Pencils, markers, and chart paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Session 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content/Purpose/Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>• Review agenda.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides 40 &amp; 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use “Peanut Activity” to develop an awareness of the similarities and differences within a group and build the team.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A bag of peanuts in shells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A blank Venn diagram and a pencil for each person (p. ___)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A plastic cup or bowl for each group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>• Review <em>Implementation Plan</em> steps 6-11; describe specific planning and implementation steps and timelines.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides 43-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 min.</td>
<td>• Teams work on <em>IP</em> steps 3-5. Assign incomplete work as “homework” for the team.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Implementation Plan</em> form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Session 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content/Purpose/Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Review agenda.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use “Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates” activity to demonstrate the problems with</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>judging someone based on appearance only.</td>
<td>• Box of assorted, soft-centered chocolates (e.g., Whitman’s crème-filled); one piece of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>candy per person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Paper and pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review “Hiccups,” “Tweaking” your program, and celebrating success.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides 64-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Teams work on <em>IP</em> steps 6 &amp; 7. Assign incomplete work as “homework” for the team.</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exit Card</td>
<td><em>Implementation Plan Form</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End quote</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schedule future meetings and determine next steps (e.g., completing the <em>Implementation</em></td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan, site visits, technical assistance, getting administrative support)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teambuilding Activities**

We recommend opening each training segment with an activity that allows team members to interact, discuss important issues that will affect the program and maybe even have a little fun. The facilitator can use the activities to encourage discussion of individual uniqueness and gifts, creative thinking, teamwork, and change, all fundamental to making a peer support program work. The activity guides are provided here so the facilitator can prepare materials for each one-hour segment.

The following teambuilding activities are provided, but feel free to use your own favorites!

**Session 1:** Getting to Know You: Two Truths and a Lie  
**Session 2:** The Peanut Activity  
**Session 3:** Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates
Getting to Know You: Two Truths and a Lie

Directions for the Facilitator

Participants: Members of the peer support program planning team.

Purpose: To allow team members to get to know each other on a deeper level.

Materials: Pencil/pen, 3” x 5” card for each team members.

Time: 5 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Directions:

Step 1: Ask individuals to write down (or draw) two things on their 3” x 5” card that are true and one thing that is a lie about their personal or professional lives, the topic you are studying, etc. Provide examples: 1) I have rafted the Ottawa River, 2) I own three cats and two dogs, 3) I met Elvis.

Step 2: Ask the person on the team wearing the brightest color to read or show his or her three items.

Step 3: Have the person to the right of the reader try to guess which item is the lie.

Step 4: Ask the reader to confirm the “lie” and briefly elaborate on his/her list of items.

Step 5: Repeat the process, moving counter-clockwise at the table, until all team members have shared their two truths and a lie.

Discussion questions:

- Were you aware of the unique experiences or talents of your teammates?
- Did you learn anything new about others on your team?
- How does sharing our uniqueness help to build relationships?
- What would be a benefit of using this activity in your classroom?

Adapted from: Puffin Productions: Teaching Resources website: www.puffin.ca/teach.htm
Session 2

The Peanut Activity

Directions for the Facilitator

Participants: Members of peer support program planning team.

Purpose: To develop an awareness of similarities and differences among individuals and the importance of looking closely at each person’s unique characteristics and talents.

Materials: A bag of peanuts with shells, enough so that each person can have one. One cup or bowl per table (to hold peanuts), paper and pencil for each participant. Venn diagram for each pair, Venn diagram transparency (for demonstration), and transparency marker.

Ask everyone to:

Step 1: Form small groups (about six each) around a table.
Step 2: Choose a peanut from the cup.
Step 3: Examine your peanut, noting its characteristics. Write a detailed description of your peanut.
Step 4: Put all the peanuts in the center of the table and mix them up.
Step 5: Now, find your own unique peanut in the pile.
Step 6: Turn to your neighbor and describe how you identified your peanut.
Step 7: Locate your Venn diagram.
Step 8: With a partner from your table, fill in the Venn diagram, choosing who will be peanuts A and B. The Venn diagram is a simple way to visualize similarities and differences. The overlapping parts of the circles should contain characteristics that the peanuts have in common. The parts that don’t overlap are for the unique features of your peanut.
Step 9: With your partner, use the second Venn diagram to fill in the circles according to your differences and similarities as people.
Discussion questions:

- Did you find your peanut? How did you recognize it?
- In what ways was your peanut the same as all the others? In what ways was it different?
- Did these differences change the value of your peanut?
- Would these differences affect what your peanut is like inside?
- Did you think your peanut would taste as good as the others?
- What does this activity show us about observations of people?

Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates

Directions for the Facilitator

Participants: Members of the peer support program planning team.

Purpose: To show the dangers of judging something or someone on appearance only. To encourage people to get to know someone before forming judgments and to promote respect for diversity.

Materials: Boxes of soft-centered, assorted chocolate candy with enough so that each participant can have one piece. Blank transparency and transparency marker for recording group results.

Ask everyone to:

Step 1: Get into groups of four to six, around a table.
Step 2: Take a piece of candy, a piece of paper, and a pencil.
Step 3: Examine your piece of candy and guess what filling is inside it. No pinching, piercing, or biting!
Step 4: Record your guess on the paper.
Step 5: Bite into your candy.
Step 6: Tally the correct guesses in your group.

Note: Approximately 80% do not guess the correct filling!

Discussion Questions:

- How easy was it to guess correctly? Why?
- Have you ever been judged unfairly due to your appearance, age, gender or race? How did it make you feel?
- Do you have any talents or abilities that people may not notice just by looking at you?
- How often do you think things about a person due to their race, looks or disability?
• Have you ever changed your opinion about a person after you have gotten to know him or her?
• What can we learn from this activity?
• How may this lesson be applied to the classroom?

PowerPoint Slides for School Team Training
Sessions One, Two, and Three

Please refer to the accompanying compact disc for Peer Support Program school team training PowerPoint slide masters.
SESSION 1

• Introductory activity
• Definition of inclusive education
• Overview and benefits of inclusion
• A definition of peer support
• Preview of Implementation Plan steps 1-5
• Team implementation planning, steps 1 & 2

SESSION 2

• Teambuilding activity
• Preview Implementation Plan steps 6 - 11
• Helpful tools and resources
• Team implementation planning, steps 3, 4, & 5

SESSION 3

• Diversity activity
• Preview Implementation Plan steps 12-15
• Dealing with Hiccups!
• “Tweaking” the program
• Celebrating success!
• Team implementation planning, steps 6 & 7
Section 3

Planning a Peer Support Program: Developing Your Implementation Plan

This section provides a detailed description of each program development step. There is also a planning chart for your team to use in developing your school's program implementation activities.
Planning a Peer Support Program

A team can benefit greatly from the peer support program training offered by the Florida Inclusion Network. In addition to covering the material in this guide, FIN facilitators can help you access financial resources for your program and walk you through the program planning process. Please contact your local FIN facilitator for more information (www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com).

If it is not possible for your team to attend peer support program development training, your team should go through the material in this guide together. The Team Training Schedule located in section 2 of this guide indicates where your team can work on a written Implementation Plan (IP) for the program. Additionally, teams will need to schedule time during or after school to complete all the steps of their Implementation Plan. The team may want to consider other individuals (e.g., guidance counselor, bookkeeper) or organizations (e.g., PTA representative, FIN) who may assist in developing specific steps of the plan.

An Implementation Plan form is provided in this section, including a list of appendices and resources to help you develop actions and strategies for each step. The Implementation Plan steps and activities are described below.

**Step 1: Recruit peer support program team members.**

- Recruit from a variety of sources, including special education teacher(s), general education teacher(s), administrator, guidance counselor, parent/guardian, and support services personnel, district ESE staff, and FIN staff.
- Look for people who *will* make the time commitment, *can* bring fresh ideas to the group, and *are* not afraid of change.
- You must have your team assembled and ready to work before proceeding to step 2.

**Step 2: Create a vision statement, principles, core beliefs, and a name for the program.**

- Review samples.
- Use the *Team Process for Developing a Vision Statement* found in Appendix B.
- Review vision statements and support materials from your school.
- Refine, revise as needed.
**Step 3:** Obtain administrative support.

- Schedule a meeting with school and district administrators.
- Invite your FIN representative to attend the meeting and discuss additional resources.
- Share the program vision statement, etc.
- Obtain approval from the local district ESE department for change of service delivery model for students with disabilities receiving peer supports.
- Schedule a faculty introduction to the program.
- Ask for resources needed for program implementation.
- Discuss other needs and possible issues, such as student training schedules, transportation needs, staff concerns.

**Step 4:** Organize team procedures.

- Establish a schedule for team meetings.
- Identify general responsibilities of team members.
- Establish a method of communication among team members.
- Establish timelines for recruitment, selection, and training of peer assistants.
- Establish timelines for selecting ESE students.
- Establish timelines for implementing the program.

**Step 5:** Identify team professional development needs.

- Identify what team members already know about peer support.
- Decide whether a site visit to an existing program would be helpful.
- Identify resources for training.
- Identify where and when training can take place.

**Step 6:** Develop program specification.

- Develop eligibility criteria for peer assistant.
- Develop list roles of and responsibilities of peer assistants.
- Determine the process for peer assistant application and training.

*For secondary school*

- Determine district/state course name and code.
- Determine grading system.
- Analyze teacher certification requirements for the course.
**Step 7:** Develop or adapt forms for use in the program.

- Develop or adapt an application form.
- Develop or adapt letters to parents.
- Develop or adapt teacher recommendation forms.
- Develop activity logs and other recording forms for peer assistants.

**Step 8:** Develop a budget and get funding.

- Identify cost of team training and orientation activities.
- Identify cost of possible program incentives (e.g., T-shirts, field trips, certificates, end-of-year celebrations).
- Develop complete program budget for the year (cost of student materials, travel, etc.).
- Identify and approach funding sources.

**Step 9:** Select ESE students to receive support.

- Identify ESE students who could benefit from support.
- Discuss the program with parents and obtain written permission.
- Review IEPs to assure compliance with delivery models, supports, and schedule changes.
- Schedule and conduct IEP revisions if necessary.

**Step 10:** Select students who will be peer assistants.

- Inform faculty about peer assistant program and application process.
- Inform students about the program application/parent permission process.
- Make program application/parent permission forms available.
- Analyze completed application/parent permission forms and select peer assistants using selection criteria.
- Conduct peer assistant training and follow-up throughout the year.

**Step 11:** Match ESE students with peer assistants.

- Review schedules and needs of both ESE students and peer assistants.
- Match students according to needs and schedules.
- Send written notification of program enrollment and schedule change requests to parents.
- Complete student schedule change forms for data entry personnel.
Step 12: Schedule and conduct peer assistant training for the year.
- Locate or develop necessary materials.
- Gather information on each ESE student to share with peer assistants.
- Use or adapt training outline in section 4.

Step 13: Evaluate the peer support program throughout the year.
- Conduct parent, student, and teacher surveys.
- Assess changes in student grades before and after the program.
- Assess discipline referrals before and after the program.
- Conduct interviews with participants and other school staff and students.

Step 14: Plan and conduct celebrations and public events for participating students, families, and staff.
- Plan an end-of-year celebration.
- Plan a field trip for participating students.
- Have students and staff carry out fund raisers at school.
- Develop other events that fit your school.

Step 15: Publicize your program success.
- Have students write articles for school newspaper.
- Contact local media about stories (with district office permission).
- Present on your program at conferences and workshops.
- Write articles for professional journals.
- Send success stories to the FIN website.
Peer Support Program
Implementation Plan
## Peer Support Program Implementation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/TASKS</th>
<th>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>COMPLETION DATE</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
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<td>Step 1. Recruit Peer Support Planning Team members.</td>
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<td>Guide, Section 1 Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)</td>
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<td>Step 2. Create a vision statement, principles, core beliefs, and name for the program.</td>
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<td>Appendices A &amp; B</td>
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<td>Step 3. Obtain administrative support.</td>
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<td>Step 4. Organize team procedures.</td>
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<td>4b. Establish team communication methods.</td>
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<td>4c. Establish timelines for</td>
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<td>recruitment, selection, and training of peer assistants.</td>
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<td>4d. Establish timeline for selecting ESE peers.</td>
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<td>8b. Identify cost of desired program incentives (T-shirts, field trips).</td>
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<td>8c. Identify cost of program materials (notebooks, etc.).</td>
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<td>9b. Notify parents.</td>
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<td>9c. Review IEPs to assure compliance with delivery models, supports and schedule changes.</td>
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| **Step 10. Recruit students to fulfill peer assistant roles.** | 10a. Inform faculty about peer assistant program and application process.  
10b. Inform students about the program application/parent permission process.  
10c. Make program applications/parent permission forms available.  
10d. Analyze completed applications and select peer assistants using selection criteria. | . | . | Guide, Section 3  
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| **Step 11. Match ESE students with peer assistants.** | 11a. Review schedules and needs of both ESE students and peer assistants.  
11b. Match students according to needs and schedules. | . | . | Guide, Section 3  
ESE Teachers; Peer Assistant prior grades; Guidance Counselor(s) |
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<td><strong>Step 13. Collect evaluation data throughout the year:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Step 14. Determine incentives &amp; celebrations for all participating students, families, and staff:</strong></td>
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<td>14a. End-of-year party or picnic</td>
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<td><strong>Step 15. Publicize program success:</strong></td>
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<td>District ESE, District media communications administrator, FIN, school website, PTA</td>
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<td>15c. Local and state conference presentations</td>
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<td>15d. Articles in professional publications</td>
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<td>15e. Post success stories on FIN website.</td>
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Team member names/titles:

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8 of 8
This section provides ideas for peer assistant training, including a training outline, content, and timeframes.
Peer Support Assistant Training

Overview of Training

Students begin their training with an initial session to introduce the program and procedures and then a small group meeting with the teachers they will be working with. Peer assistants then begin classroom observations. Peer assistant training continues according to the training schedule. Awards, incentive, and celebrations for students and peer assistants are offered periodically. Session outlines for the first 10 weeks of the program are included here. These sessions are part of the requirements for students in middle school and high school who are getting credit for the program.

Schedule

Training can be scheduled before school, after school during an activity or club period, during school hours, during a set planning period, or even over the summer. Start the training as soon as possible after the selection of participants has been completed. Try to hold the first training session before the peer assistants are placed in their assigned classes. After the first training session, each student should spend one week in the assigned classroom to observe the students and teachers. This observation will give the peer assistant an understanding of the classroom routines and schedule, the teacher’s expectations for classroom behavior, and the support needs of the student(s) he or she will be assisting. The second training session should take place soon after the initial observation week. The third and fourth training sessions should be scheduled for weeks three and four of the program.

After the fourth week, training can be scheduled every other week and then monthly, depending on how much support and problem-solving help the peer assistants need. Outlines for 10 calendar weeks of training are in this section, with no training scheduled for weeks 5, 7, and 9. After 10 weeks, additional training sessions can be scheduled to meet specific student and classroom needs.

Group activities are used to introduce some of the lessons. These are great icebreakers but are also focused on having students think about issues of diversity and creativity. Feel free to use your own favorite “mixers” to set a good tone and help students get to know each other.

Session time frames, content, and activities may be modified to fit school schedules and the age levels of the participating students. Please use these materials as your needs dictate. Please note training sessions 3-10 require the use of The Teacher’s Resource Guide book (see Resources section) in conducting activities with students.
Getting to Know You: Two Truths and a Lie

Directions for the Facilitator

Participants: Members of the peer support program planning team.

Purpose: To allow team members to get to know each other on a deeper level.

Materials: Pencil/pen, 3” x 5” card for each team member.

Time: 5 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Directions:

Step 1: Ask individuals to write down (or draw) two things on their 3” x 5” card that are true and one thing that is a lie about their personal or professional lives, the topic you are studying, etc. Provide examples: 1) I have rafted the Ottawa River, 2) I own three cats and two dogs, 3) I met Elvis.

Step 2: Ask the person on the team wearing the brightest color to read or show his or her three items.

Step 3: Have the person to the right of the reader try to guess which item is the lie.

Step 4: Ask the reader to confirm the “lie” and briefly elaborate on his/her list of items.

Step 5: Repeat the process, moving counterclockwise at the table, until all team members have shared their two truths and a lie.

Discussion questions:

- Were you aware of the unique experiences and talents of your teammates?
- Did you learn anything new about others on your team?
- How does sharing our uniqueness help to build relationships?
- What would be a benefit of using this activity in your classroom?

Adapted from: Puffin Productions: Teaching Resources website: www.puffin.ca/teach.htm
The Peanut Activity

Directions for Facilitator

Participants: Peer assistants.

Purpose: To develop an awareness of similarities and differences among individuals and the importance of looking closely at each person’s unique characteristics and talents.

Materials: A bag of peanuts with shells, enough so that each person can have one. One cup or bowl per table (to hold peanuts), paper and pencil for each participant. Venn diagram for each pair of students, Venn diagram transparency (for demonstration), and transparency marker.

Ask everyone to:

Step 1: Form small groups (about six each) around a table.
Step 2: Choose a peanut from the cup.
Step 3: Examine your peanut, noting its characteristics. Write a detailed description of your peanut.
Step 4: Put all the peanuts in the center of the table and mix them up.
Step 5: Now, find your own unique peanut in the pile.
Step 6: Turn to your neighbor and describe how you identified your peanut.
Step 7: Locate your Venn diagram.
Step 8: With a partner from your table, fill in the Venn diagram, choosing who will be peanuts A and B. The Venn diagram is a simple way to visualize similarities and differences. The overlapping parts of the circles should contain characteristics that the peanuts have in common. The parts that don’t overlap are for the unique features of your peanut.
Step 9: With your partner, take a blank Venn diagram and fill in the circles according to your differences and similarities as people.
Discussion questions:

- Did you find your peanut? How did you recognize it?
- In what ways was your peanut the same as all the others? In what ways was it different?
- Did these differences change the value of your peanut?
- Would these differences affect what your peanut is like inside?
- Did you think your peanut would taste as good as the others?
- What does this activity show us about observations of people?

Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates

Directions for Facilitator

Participants: Peer assistants.

Purpose: To show the dangers of judging something or someone on appearance only. To encourage people to get to know someone before forming judgments and to promote respect for diversity.

Materials: Boxes of soft centered, assorted chocolate candy with enough so that each student can have one piece. Blank transparency and transparency marker for recording group results.

Ask everyone to:

Step 1: Get into groups of four to six, around a table.
Step 2: Take a piece of candy, a piece of paper, and a pencil.
Step 3: Examine your piece of candy and guess what filling is inside it. No pinching, piercing, or biting!
Step 4: Record your guess on the paper.
Step 5: Bite into your candy.
Step 6: Tally the correct guesses in your group.

Note: Approximately 80% do not guess the correct filling!

Discussion questions:

- How easy was it to guess correctly? Why?
- Have you ever been judged unfairly due to your appearance, age, gender, or race? How did it make you feel?
- Do you have any talents or abilities that people may not notice just by looking at you?
- How often do you think things about a person due to their race, looks, or disability?
- Have you ever changed your opinion about a person after you have gotten to know him or her?
- What can we learn from this activity?
- How may this lesson be applied to the classroom?
*For students who may have allergies or special diets, allow them to give their chocolate to another student to bite. Also provide a “sugar-free” or other type of candy for them to eat in lieu of the chocolate so that don’t feel left out of the fun!

Connect the Dots

Directions for Facilitator

Participants: Peer assistants.

Purpose: To encourage creative thinking by the students. To demonstrate how teamwork can often make a task easier.

Materials: “Connect the Dots” worksheet and pencil for each student.

Ask everyone to:

Step 1: Gather in groups of four to six.
Step 2: Look at the “Connect the Dots” worksheet.
Step 3: Connect ALL nine dots using only four lines. The lines MUST be connected to each other. (Allow three minutes.)
Step 4: Now show your group your solutions. Think “outside the box.”
Step 5: (Wait to see if anyone gets the solution. Show the rest of the group.)

Discussion questions:

- Did you find this task hard when you first tried it?
- Did some of you find it easier than others? Why?
- Did working in a group help to solve the problem?
- Did the teacher provide any supports to assist students in finding the solution (hints, modeling, partial answer)?
Connect the Dots (using only four lines)
Connect the Dots (Answer Key)

Think outside the box!
**Circle of Friends**

**Directions for Facilitator**

**Participants:** Peer assistants.

**Purpose:** To demonstrate how students with disabilities often lack the friendships that students without disabilities enjoy.

**Materials:** “Circle of Friends” transparency, transparency markers. “Circle of Friends” worksheet for each student (sheet of paper with four concentric circles). Pencils with erasers.

Pass out the materials and ask the students to:

**Step 1:** Write your name or initials in the center circle.

**Step 2:** In the same circle, write the names or initials of your closest friend(s) and family members, the people you love the most.

**Step 3:** In the next circle write the names or initials of your other good friends and extended family members.

**Step 4:** In the next circle write the names or initials of the people you see from time-to-time who are friendly acquaintances, such as neighbors, classmates, people on a sports team with you, friends at church.

**Step 5:** In the largest circle, write the names of people who are paid to do a service for you, such as teachers, therapists, mechanics, bus drivers, and doctors.

**Step 6:** Now count the number of people on your worksheet and write the number in the bottom right corner of your paper.

**Step 7:** Now erase all the names or initials in your circles, except for the outer circle of paid people and the inner circle of your closest friends and family members.

**Step 8:** Now count the names again, write that number down and compare it to the first number.

**Discussion questions:**

- How many names did you have on your original circle of friends sheet?
- How many are there now?
• Why might a student with a disability have more people in the outer circle than you have?
• Why might a student with a disability have fewer people in the middle circles than you had?
• How did it make you feel to “lose” the friends you had to erase?
• How do you think more “middle people” could be added for students with disabilities?
Circle of Friends
Peer Assistant Training Week 1

Duration: 90 minutes.

Materials:

- Student information sheets
- Transparency of guiding principles and core beliefs
- Transparency of qualifications and responsibilities of peer assistants
- School’s confidentiality policy
- 70-page spiral notebook, three-hole punched, for each student
- Index cards (2 per student)
- Pencils and transparency markers

* In this session, students will be meeting for about 15 minutes with the classroom teacher they will be working with. Arrangements need to be made in advance for the teachers to be present for this portion of the training.

Students will

- Complete student information card.
- Be introduced to the peer assistant program.
- Become familiar with the guiding principles and core beliefs of the program.
- Understand the expectations and responsibilities of peer assistants.
- Understand why confidentiality is so important.
- Receive a notebook and organize it for use in the program: Number pages from 1-140. Write “Contents” on page 1, "Observations" on page 3, "Journal" on page 11, and "Questions and Answers" on page 134.
- Learn the purpose of their observation week. Understand they will need to use one of the 3 x 5 cards to observe and write down
  - A seating chart for the classroom
  - Notes on students who appear to be having problems
  - What the teacher does to help these students
  - Ideas for additional ways these students may be assisted
  - Any questions they have.
- Receive their classroom and teacher assignment.
  - Break into small groups with assigned teacher for 15 minutes.
  - Learn about their classroom from the teacher.
- Return to the large group. Using an index card as a Ticket Out the Door, fill in the blank: “One thing I am looking forward to doing as a peer assistant is ________________.” Students hand in their Ticket Out the Door as they leave.
Peer Assistant Training Week 2

Duration: 90 minutes.

Materials:
- Three-ring binders (2") containing nine blank weekly logs (see appendix J)
- Transparency of grading policy
- Mini Lottie Kit (Low-Tech Tools for Inclusive Education)
- Index cards, pencils, and transparency markers

Students will:
- Bring their observation notebooks.
- Share their observations on
  - Seating charts and where students are placed within the class
  - Students who appear to be having problems
  - Interventions that the class teacher uses to help these students
  - Additional ways in which these students may be assisted
  - Questions that need to be addressed.
- Discuss possible reasons why students had difficulties.
- Brainstorm how peer assistants might help these students.
- Receive a three-ring binder containing nine weekly logs.
- Review directions on how to use the weekly logs to document the assistance they provide to each student.
- Understand the grading policy for peer assistants.
- Learn about the *‘Lottie Kit’ and other “low tech” aides for students, including
  - Highlighters
  - Glue sticks
  - Pencils
  - Stickers
  - Markers
  - Highlighter tape
  - Colored pencils
  - Rulers
  - Sticky notes.
- Complete their Ticket Out the Door by writing their response to the following prompt on a 3 x 5 card: “One burning question I have is _______________ _________________.”

* Check with your FIN facilitator or FDLRS office for more information on the Lottie Kit.
Peer Assistant Training Week 3

Duration: 90 minutes.

Materials:
- Find a Peanut activity materials
- Paper, index cards, and pencils

Students will:
- Participate in the “Peanut Activity.”
- Share an entry from their journal with the group and be reminded to continue journal entries after each session as a peer assistant.
- Review their weekly logs and discuss the student problems and type of assistance they provided.
- Ask questions written in their notebooks; discuss and record possible answers.
- Organize their three-ring binders so that they contain
  - Seating chart for the classroom (inside the front cover)
  - Spiral notebook
  - Weekly logs
  - Interventions/accommodations.
- Review McCarney’s list of strategies/interventions for each of the following:
  - Student does not remain on task (page 210).
  - Student talks to others during quiet activity periods (page 446).
  - Student is disorganized (page 12).
- Explore the possible interventions and support that can be provided for each case scenario and select his or her favorite three for each.
- Record the three chosen strategies/interventions for each case scenario.
- Share choices with the group, discuss the pros and cons of each choice, and adjust choices as necessary.
- Watch as facilitators role play both inappropriate and appropriate interactions between a student and a peer assistant:
  - Example: Student is off task because he/she doesn’t understand the directions, and the peer assistant remarks “What, are you stupid?”
- Write a response to the following prompt on their Ticket Out the Door: “One interesting experience I had this week as a peer assistant was__________.”
Peer Assistant Training Week 4

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials:
- Circle of Friends activity materials
- List of qualifications and responsibilities of peer assistants found in Appendix E
- Paper, index cards, pencils, and transparency markers

Students will:
- Participate in the Circle of Friends activity.
- Review the expectations and responsibilities of a peer assistant, share experiences, and discuss any areas of concern.
- Review *The Teacher’s Resource Guide*’s list of strategies/interventions for each of the following:
  - Student does not stay in assigned area (page 24).
  - Student needs oral questions and directions repeated (page 26.)
- Explore the possible interventions and support that can be provided for each case scenario and select his or her favorite three for each.
- Record the three chosen strategies/interventions for each case scenario.
- Share choices with the group, discuss the pros and cons of each choice, and adjust choices as necessary.
- Break into small groups assigned by the teacher. Review and discuss
  - The needs of the students requiring assistance
  - Ways in which the peer assistant can help
  - Ways in which the teacher can assist
  - Problem situations.
- Return to original groups.
- Discuss and decide what incentives should be ordered for the peer assistants and the students they serve.
- Share ideas for the design of a peer assistant T-shirt.
- Complete a *Ticket Out the Door* with the following prompt: “Peer assistant training could be improved by __________________.”
Peer Assistant Training Week 6

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials:
- Paper, index cards, and pencils

Students will:
- Share peer assistant experiences from the previous week.
- Review McCarney’s list of strategies/interventions for each of the following:
  - Student is unmotivated (page 339).
  - Student responds inappropriately to peer assistant (page 280).
- Explore the possible interventions and support that can be offered for each case scenario and select his or her favorite three for each.
- Record the three chosen strategies/interventions for each case scenario.
- Share choices with the group, discuss the pros and cons of each choice, and adjust choices as necessary.
- Break into small groups assigned by the teacher. Review and discuss
  - The needs of the students requiring assistance
  - Ways in which the peer assistant can help
  - Ways in which the teacher can assist
  - Problem situations.
- Return to original groups.
- Discuss and decide on the design of the peer assistant T-shirt.
- Participate in a role-play with facilitators: At the beginning of class a peer assistant is at a table talking while students are off task versus a peer assistant walks in, puts down belongings, and begins moving around the class reminding the students of a test and assisting.
- Complete a *Ticket Out the Door* with the following prompt: “One useful strategy I have used to support my assigned student(s) is __________________________.”
Peer Assistant Training Week 8

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials:
- Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates activity materials
- Paper, index cards, and pencils

Students will:
- Participate in the Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates activity.
- Review McCarney’s list of strategies/interventions for each of the following:
  - Student has difficulty concentrating (page 33).
  - Student is unsuccessful in activities requiring listening (page 63).
  - Student has difficulty comprehending what he/she reads (page 89).
- Explore the possible interventions and support that can be offered for each case scenario and select his or her favorite three for each.
- Record the three chosen strategies/interventions for each case scenario.
- Share choices with the group, discuss the pros and cons of each choice, and adjust choices as necessary.
- Break into small groups assigned by the teacher. Review and discuss
  - The needs of the students requiring assistance
  - Ways in which the peer assistant can help
  - Ways in which the teacher can assist
  - Problem situations.
- Return to original groups.
- Review peer assistant grading system and the criteria for receiving an “A” grade.
- Distribute student and peer assistant incentives
- Complete a Ticket Out the Door with the following prompt: “I will work hard to improve ______________________.”
Peer Assistant Training Week 10

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials:
- Connect the Dots activity materials
- Paper, index cards, pencils, and transparency markers

Students will:
- Participate in the ‘Connect the Dots’ activity to encourage creative thinking.
- Review McCarney’s list of strategies/interventions for each of the following:
  - Student has difficulty copying notes (page 129).
  - Student has difficulty solving math word problems (page 166).
  - Student does not complete assignments (page 241).
- Explore the possible interventions and support that can be offered for each case scenario and select his or her favorite three for each.
- Record the three chosen strategies/interventions for each case scenario.
- Share choices with the group, discuss the pros and cons of each choice, and adjust choices as necessary.
- Break into small groups assigned by the teacher. Review and discuss
  - The needs of the students requiring assistance
  - Ways in which the peer assistant can help
  - Ways in which the teacher can assist
  - Problem situations.
- Return to original groups.
- Students participate in set of 3 role-play scenarios with facilitators, “The self-initiating peer assistant.”
  1. A peer assistant sits and watches as a student struggles
  2. A peer who continuously asks teacher what to do
  3. A peer assistant who “thinks outside the box” and independently, creatively assists a student.
- Complete a *Ticket Out the Door* with the following prompt: “My most creative idea on how to assist a student was ________________________.”
This section has appendices that include samples of forms, letters, documentation tools, and other critical information designed to facilitate successful implementation of the program.
The following documents can be found in this section:

Appendix A: Sample Vision Statement, Core Beliefs, and Guiding Principles

Appendix B: Team Process for Developing a Vision Statement

Appendix C: Sample Peer Assistant Eligibility Criteria (secondary and elementary)

Appendix D: Sample Program Advertising Flyer

Appendix E: Sample Peer Assistant Application/Parent Permission Form (secondary and elementary)

Appendix F: Sample Peer Assistant Teacher Recommendation Form

Appendix G: Sample Letter to Parents (secondary and elementary)

Appendix H: Sample Peer Assistant Grading System & Log (secondary)

Appendix I: Florida Middle and High School Course Codes

Appendix J: Peer Assistant Weekly Log

Appendix K: Surveys and Program Evaluation Tools

Appendix L: Student Information Tool
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE VISION STATEMENT

Our school is a place where students recognize, accept, and value each other’s differences and commonalities and are supportive of and supported by the whole school community.

SAMPLE CORE BELIEFS

- The peer support program expands all possible academic, behavioral, social, and learning opportunities.
- The presence of students with disabilities in the general education classroom provides learning opportunities and experiences that are beyond those of the general education curriculum.
- Friendships develop between students with disabilities and their typical peers in inclusive settings.
- Peer assistants and students with disabilities benefit both educationally and socially from their interactions in the general education classroom.

SAMPLE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The needs of all program participants will be considered by the team.
- All students will have opportunities to share their unique gifts with others.
- All team members will use person-first language.
- All students will be included in discussions and decisions that are about them.
- All students will participate in an age-appropriate curriculum; social learning may be the primary goal for some.
- All students will be provided with a functional system of communication at all times.
- All students will help solve problems about behaviors or situations as they arise.
APPENDIX B

TEAM PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A VISION STATEMENT

**Time:** 35 minutes

**Materials:** 3” x 5” sticky notes (several per person), chart paper, markers, a copy of the school’s vision statement

**Directions:**

**Step 1.** Complete the following statement by writing one response to the following statement per Sticky note: “I believe that our school is a place where…”

5 min.

**Step 2.** Post all responses on chart paper.

2 min.

**Step 3.** Group responses by placing statements with a similar “theme” together.

5 min.

**Step 4.** Assign each group of statements to paired team members. Pairs create statements from combined groups. All pairs write their statements on one piece of chart paper.

10 min.

**Step 5.** Look at your school’s vision statement and add to or modify your list as needed.

5 min.

**Step 6.** Vote for your top three statements.

3 min.

**Step 7.** Combine your top three ideas into a vision statement. Try to keep your vision statement to one sentence in length. Write your vision statement on a piece of chart paper to share with your faculty.

5 min.
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
SECONDARY LEVEL

To qualify for the course, the student:

- must have a grade-point average of _____
- must have an elective class, that can be dropped
- must be eager to help others
- must work well with other student
- must be organized and reliable
- must have three teacher recommendations.

During the course, the student will be responsible for:

- being a positive role model
- assisting students with organization, directions, understanding tasks, and reading
- giving encouragement to peers
- maintaining a daily journal and a weekly log
- communicating with teachers regularly
- attending peer assistant training sessions
- completing an independent or group project related to disability issues.

SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
ELEMENTARY LEVEL

To qualify for the program, the student must

- have a _____ grade average
- be eager to help other
- work well with other children
- be organized and reliable
- write a paragraph explaining why he or she wants to be a peer assistant.
During the program the student will be responsible for

- being a positive role model
- assisting students with organization, directions, understanding tasks, and reading
- giving encouragement to peers
- communicating regularly with teachers
- attending peer assistant training sessions.
CALLING ALL CARING STUDENTS

Do you want to

- Be part of an exciting new school program this year?
- Do something to REALLY make a difference in the world today?
- Get credit at school for helping others?

Then read on...

This year our school is starting a new program called ___(your program title.) If you are accepted, you can earn elective credit helping students in their classes. You will be assigned to help specific students and will be trained on how to help!

Interested? Pick up your application at the main office now!

Hurry! The deadline for applying is ________________.

For more information, contact M__ _____________ in Room ___________.

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APPENDIX E

SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT APPLICATION/PARENT PERMISSION FORM

SECONaARY LEVEL

To qualify for the course, the student

- must have grade point average of ______
- must have an elective class, that can be dropped
- must be eager to help others
- must work well with other students
- must be organized and reliable
- must have three teacher recommendations.

During the course, the student will be responsible for

- being a positive role model
- assisting students with organization, directions, understanding tasks, and reading
- giving encouragement to peers
- maintaining a daily journal and a weekly log
- communicating with teachers regularly
- attending peer assistant training sessions
- completing an independent or group project related to disability issues.

Student Name _______________________________________________________

Student ID # ____________________

Home Phone # _____________________

The following elective class will be dropped ________________________ Period # ___

The following elective class will be added __________________________ Period # ___

I have read the above and grant permission for my child __________________________
to participate in the Peer Assistant Program.

_________________________________________ Date

Parent/Guardian Signature
SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT APPLICATION/PARENT PERMISSION FORM

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

To qualify for the program, the student must

- have a ____ grade average
- be eager to help others
- work well with other children
- be organized and reliable
- write a paragraph explaining why he or she wants to be a peer assistant.

During the program the student will be responsible for

- being a positive role model
- assisting students with organization, directions, understanding tasks, and reading
- giving encouragement to peers
- communicating regularly with teachers
- attending peer assistant training sessions.

Student Name: ____________________________________________

Student ID # ___________________________ Student Grade: ______

Home Phone # _______________________

Why do you want to be in the peer support program?

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

I have read the above and grant permission for my child, ____________________________, to participate in the Peer Assistant Program.

________________________________________  ________________
Parent/Guardian Signature                      Date

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APPENDIX F

SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT TEACHER RECOMMENDATION FORM

Student Name ____________________________________________________________

The above student is interested in taking the peer assistant elective class. The peer assistant class will not affect the above student’s academic classes in any way. The student will not be pulled from an academic class as part of this program/elective class.

To enroll, the student

- must have grade point average of ________
- must have an elective class that can be dropped
- must be eager to help others
- must work well with other students
- must be organized and reliable
- must have three teacher recommendations.

During the course, the student will be responsible for

- being a positive role model
- assisting students with organization, directions, understanding tasks, and reading
- giving encouragement to peers
- maintaining a daily journal and a weekly log
- communicating with teachers regularly
- attending peer assistant training sessions
- completing an independent or group project related to disability issues.

Do you recommend this student for this program?       Yes      No

Teacher comments:_________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Teacher Signature: _________________________________________________________

Teacher Name (please print): ________________________________________________

Please return this recommendation to __________________________________________
by __________________. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form.
Dear Parents and Guardians,

There is a new program called (NAME OF YOUR PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM) being offered at (YOUR SCHOOL.) Students selected for this program will be enrolled in (COURSE TITLE) and will receive one full credit for successfully completing the course. Students enrolled in the course will provide supervised assistance to students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Peer assistants will assist students during instructional and noninstructional activities.

Your child is interested in this program and received an application packet. Each student must return the completed application and a signed parent permission form. Applicants must also have written recommendations from three teachers. These letters will be sent by the teachers directly to the program coordinator. The responsibilities of peer assistants are included in the application and your child’s grade for this course will be based on how he or she meets these responsibilities. We may not have room for all students who want to take the course. Students will be selected according to the enrollment criteria. You will be notified if your child is chosen to participate in the program.

Students in the course will learn about students with disabilities, how to provide help to them, and why confidentiality is important. If training is scheduled outside of school hours, parents/guardians will be responsible for transportation for the child.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this program.

Sincerely,

Peer Assistant Program Coordinator

Phone: ________________________________

Best time to reach me is: ______________
Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în engleză

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în spaniolă

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în franceză

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în germană

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în italiană

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în portugheză

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în rusă

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în arabă

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în chineză

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în coreană

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în japoneză

Încredințarea pentru elevi cu dizabilități și programul de asistență de paturi în hindi
APPENDIX H

SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT GRADING SYSTEM
SECONDARY LEVEL

- 20 points per week for direct work assisting students
- 10 points per week for daily journal entries
- 10 points per week for completing weekly log
- 25 points for each training session attended
- 50 points for quarterly project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assisting Students</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Entries</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Log</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>62/65 = 97% = A</td>
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**Example of a Peer Assistant’s Weekly Grade**

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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Entries</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Log</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending Training</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>62/65 = 97% = A</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Entries</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Log</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending Training</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>31/40 = 72.5% = low C</td>
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SAMPLE BLANK PEER ASSISTANT GRADE LOG

Name of Peer Assistant: __________________________ Quarter: ____.

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<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assisting Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Entries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Log</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending Training</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Grade</td>
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<td>Assisting Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Entries</td>
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<td>Weekly Log</td>
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<th>Points Possible</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Assisting Students</td>
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<td>Journal Entries</td>
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<td>Weekly Log</td>
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<td>Attending Training</td>
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<td>Grade</td>
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<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assisting Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Entries</td>
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<td>Weekly Log</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
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</table>
Peer-To-Peer-Support Module
Intensive Training / Maureen Ziegler
(Curriculum Construction / supplement to 01/05/06 information)

Curriculum construction (for adoption by the local board) should consider:
• State of Michigan requirements – look for requirements online at: http://mi.gov
• Local district requirements

Local Considerations:
• Resources (what is the cost-benefit of this class?)
  o Number of hours in the school day (can we do this?)
  o Number of students (minimum to offer class? maximum / pay overages?)
• State assessments (Will this class improve mandated test scores?)
• No Child Left Behind: (Will this class benefit the district? student?)

Process:
• Identify local need (Examples: Students with disability / IDEIA 2004 (LRE) / NCLB / student achievement scores)
• Interface with content standards / Michigan Curriculum Framework
• Understand and articulate integration of content standards and opportunity for all students in K-12 education
• Join curriculum design team (general and special education / admin.)
• Identify: local need, requested support class, articulated benefit for general education students
• Form coalitions of support (curriculum committee, local teacher union, etc.)

Generate:
• Local curriculum recommendation and support for this curriculum/course from school improvement committees and others.

Present to:
• Central office administrative team for input/ clarification / feedback regarding presentation to board of education / date for presentation
• Final suggestions for presentation to board of education from Superintendent Schedule presentation to board of education
• Schedule presentation to board of education
  o First reading
  o Date for consideration for adoption
  o (if) Adopted what is this could it be clearer?

Next Steps:
• Provide Staff Awareness, Information and Training, including schedule
• Include in Student Course Selection (Schedule).
  Check with local district for timeline to include new courses in schedule.

Questions? Contact pbrumback1@yahoo.com  Patricia A. Brumback, Ed.S.
# APPENDIX J

## SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT WEEKLY LOG

*Week of ___/___/___  Name of Peer Assistant ____________________*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of the week</th>
<th>Name of Peer(s)</th>
<th>Understanding task</th>
<th>Aid with directions</th>
<th>Focus/on-task</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Reading text</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parent/Guardian Signature ____________________ Date ____________________**
APPENDIX K

SURVEYS AND PROGRAM EVALUATION TOOLS
Teacher Survey

Thank you for your assistance in evaluating the Peer Support Program. This brief survey will provide valuable information to guide program improvement efforts, as well as support continued program implementation. Please place a √ in the box indicating your response to the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am comfortable having a peer assistant in my classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The peer assistant provided effective supports to students in my classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This program has enabled me to be a more effective teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Peer assistants learn valuable leadership skills by helping others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students who receive peer supports have demonstrated improved work habits in my classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students who receive peer supports have demonstrated gains in social skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students who receive peer supports have demonstrated gains in academic performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am confident that peer assistants’ academic assignments are not compromised by their participation in this program.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I observe benefits to other students in my classroom who are not part of the peer support program.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I would like to continue having peer supports in my classroom next year.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Recommendations:
### Peer Assistant Survey

Thank you for completing this important survey for the Peer Support Program. Please place a √ in the box that best describes your response to each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have made friends with one or more of the students that I help in this program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The peer support training sessions gave me the information I needed to be a good peer assistant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am able to successfully maintain my school work and homework while serving as a peer assistant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I discuss challenges with the peer support teacher when I need help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I give the teacher feedback on student progress and complete my weekly logs.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe the Peer Support Program helps students with disabilities be more successful in school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I believe the Peer Support Program helps students with disabilities be more successful in social and recreational activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I understand more about the needs of people with disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I think the Peer Support Program benefits other students in my classrooms.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I would like to continue being a Peer Assistant next year.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Recommendations:
Parent Survey

We are pleased that your child has been participating in the Peer Support Program at our school this year. As you know, the purpose of this program is to increase positive interactions among students with and without disabilities and provide support to students in general education settings throughout the school. We would like your opinion about the program so that we can continue to make improvements and build on success. Please read each statement below and place a √ in the box that best describes your opinion. We also welcome your comments below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>I Don’t Know</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>My child has enjoyed being in the Peer Support Program this year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>My child likes going to school more than ever before.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>My child has made new friends as a result of this program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>My child has learned new skills as a result of this program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>My child shares positive experiences about this program to family members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>My child participates in more social or recreational activities as a result of this program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>My child’s academic performance has been just as good, if not better, than before participating in this program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I think the Peer Support Program benefits other students in my child’s school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I would like my child to continue being in this program next year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I think other parents should encourage their children to become involved in a program like this.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
# Peer Support Program Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school:</th>
<th>____________________________</th>
<th>Elem.</th>
<th>M.S.</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District:</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Name/Title:</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact phone or email:</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Number of ESE students enrolled in the program: ________
Number of Gen. Ed. students enrolled in the program: ________
Number of Gen. Ed. students enrolled that are considered “at risk” (e.g., dropout prevention, have AIPs, low SES, etc.): ________

**Before** (previous school year, grading period, or semester) and **after** (current) data for *individual* students currently enrolled in the program may include (see attached):

- **Grades**
- **Attendance**
- **Discipline Referrals**

**Anecdotal data:**

Students (Gen. Ed. & ESE), teachers (Gen. Ed. & ESE), and/or parent comments relative to their experiences and feelings about the Peer Support program. The following questions refer to participants’ present experiences in school versus their experiences prior to program participation.

**Examples:**
- Do they like school better than before?
- Are they doing better in school? Do they have more friends than before?
- Do teachers/parents feel that students are performing better at school? At home?
- Do students seem to have more self-esteem than in prior years? Have attitudes of students without disabilities changed in regard to students with disabilities? What evidence exists to support responses to these questions: In other words, “How do you know?”
# Grades of Students Enrolled in Peer Support Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Letter Grades (all courses)</th>
<th>No. of grades Quarter ______ (not enrolled in program)</th>
<th>No. of grades Quarter _____ (enrolled in program)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student A (ESE)</strong></td>
<td>A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student B (Gen. Ed.)</strong></td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student C (&quot;At risk&quot;)</strong></td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>F</td>
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</table>
## Attendance and Discipline Referrals for Students Enrolled in the Peer Support Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name (* denotes ESE)</th>
<th>Days Absent During Quarter (not enrolled in program)</th>
<th>Days Absent During Quarter (enrolled in program)</th>
<th>No. of Discipline Referrals Quarter (not enrolled in program)</th>
<th>No. of Discipline Referrals Quarter (enrolled in program)</th>
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</table>
Other Data Collection Points to Consider

(Please note, unless otherwise specified, the term “student” refers to students with disabilities enrolled in ESE programs.)

School-based data:

- FCAT scores - reading and math
- Comparison of FCAT scores for ESE students in self-contained or resource and those in general education classes
- Comparison of FCAT scores for students with and without disabilities
- Number and percent of students performing at or below level 2 (reading & math)
- Number of students and percent of time in general education classes
- Number of students and percent of time in general education classes by disability label
- Number and percent of students participating in FCAT (by disability label)
- Individual student grades – comparison of ESE students in self-contained or resource and those in general education classes
- Number and percent of students graduating with standard diploma
- Number and percent of students graduating with special diploma
- Discipline data – comparison between ESE students in self-contained or resource vs. those in general education classes
- Attendance data – rates for ESE students in self-contained or resource vs. those in general education classes
- Number and percent of all ESE students served in various service delivery models (self-contained, resource, co-teach, support facilitation, consultation)
- Number and percent of all ESE students served in various service delivery models (self-contained, resource, co-teach, support facilitation, consultation) by disability category.

Essential questions:

- What do we want to know as a result of examining our data?
- What do we think we need as a result of examining our data?
- What don’t we know as a result of examining our data?
- What do we want to know more about?
- How do we find out?

Explicit questions:

- Do students receiving peer supports have greater achievement levels that those in segregated classrooms?
Do students receiving peer supports have greater opportunities to interact with peers without disabilities?

To what extent are students with disabilities educated in classrooms with nondisabled peers (access to the general education curriculum)?

To what extent are students with disabilities participating in FCAT and at what levels are they performing?

How do students with disabilities compare with same age, nondisabled peers in regard to FCAT scores?

To what extent are students with disabilities graduating and with what type of diploma (special, regular, or certificate of completion)?

How do graduation rates for students with disabilities compare with nondisabled peers?

What other types of service delivery models are students with disabilities participating in that support their access to general education settings?

Do students with disabilities behave better when educated in inclusive classrooms?

Do students with disabilities attend school more regularly when educated in inclusive classrooms?
APPENDIX L

STUDENT INFORMATION TOOLS
## Student Learning Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Grade:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nickname:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Home Phone:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Ed. Teacher(s)</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESE Consulting Teacher:</th>
<th>Paraprofessional:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**What does the student like? Dislike? What are the student’s strengths?**

**What is the student’s predominant learning style?** (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile)

**How does the student communicate? Does the student use an augmentative device?**

**Does the student have difficulty with specific academic activities? Describe.**

**What positive behavioral support strategies have worked in the past? What does the student do when she/he is frustrated? If the student has a Behavior Intervention Plan, what are the strategies listed on the plan?**

**Is there a special reinforcer for the student? Describe:**

FIN 2005
### Student Learning Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What action might cause the student to become extremely stressed? (i.e. changing the student's schedule without visually warning the student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What supports and accommodations have worked in the past or are necessary for success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Check any of the following supports that the student has used in the past and that have been successful:

- visual schedule
- task cards
- work systems
- reinforcement menu
- breaks
- work broken into smaller parts
- visual frames around work
- highlighters
- word banks
- calculator
- spell-check device
- peer supports
- colored folders
- checklists
- other (describe)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there medical concerns or medication the team should know about?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Assistive Technology does the student currently use?</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What one or two things would make this a successful year for this student?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there another student in the class that seems to making friends with this student?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What other information should the team know about the student?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# Student Interest Profile

## All About _____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Grade:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye Color:</td>
<td>Hair Color:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Brothers:</td>
<td>Ages:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sisters:</td>
<td>Ages:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives with (circle one):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mom</td>
<td>dad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 's Home and Community

- My favorite thing to do at home is _____________________________
- My favorite thing to do with my family is _____________________________
- My favorite thing to do with my friends is _____________________________
- The thing I do best is ________________________________________
- Do you like sports? _____ Which sport do you like best? ___________
- Do you like music? _____ Listen to CDs? ______
- Watch music videos? ______
- Do you play an instrument? _____ Which one? __________________
- Do you have any hobbies or things you like to collect? _____________
- Do you have any pets? _______ What kind? ___________________
- Do you have a best friend? ___________ Why is he/she your best friend? __________________

## 's School Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you like school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your favorite subject? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your least favorite subject? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you enjoy most about school last year? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you ever get in trouble at school? If so, why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| When do you do your homework? |
| Where do you do your homework? |
| Finish this statement: School would be better if only _____________________________

## 's Future

Complete these statements:

- One week from now, I would like to _____________________________
- One month from now, I would like to _____________________________
- This summer I want to _____________________________
- I want to learn how to _____________________________
- When I am 20 I want to _____________________________
- When I am 30 I want to _____________________________
This section contains recommended resources and references to help with your peer support program.
RESOURCES

*Recommended for purchase as resources for each school team.

Abery, B., et. al. (1997). *Yes I can, a social inclusion curriculum for students with and without disabilities.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration.


WEBLIOGRAPHY

• www.peakparent.org – parent training and information center serving families and educators of children, youth, and adults with disabilities.

• www.tash.org – international organization that supports the full participation and inclusion of children, youth, and adults with severe disabilities.

• www.nichcy.org – National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities; resources for parents and educators.

• www.ldonline.org – Learning Disabilities Online; resources for parents and educators of children with learning disabilities.

• http://www.projectparticipate.org/ - useful resources for inclusive schools & teams.

• http://www.cec.sped.org/ - Council for Exceptional Children.


• www.projectparticipate.org
REFERENCES


