



NTACT

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Peer Mediated Supports Annotated Bibliography

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What are peer mediated supports?

Peer mediated supports involve typical peers without disabilities providing assistance to classmates with disabilities (Carter, Sisco, Chung, & Stanton-Chapman, 2010). As an intervention peer mediated supports can serve as an alternative to the use of one-on-one paraprofessionals. Peer mediated supports involves training typical peers to promote positive academic, social, and communication outcomes for students with disabilities. There are three types of peer mediated supports including peer support arrangements, peer networks, and peer partner programs. Peer support arrangements are defined as interventions where two or more peers are trained to offer social and academic support to a peer with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Peer networks are interventions where a group of students without disabilities (3-6) are recruited to encourage social connections and interactions with students with disabilities beyond the classroom. Peer partner programs involve a wide range of programs such as peer buddy programs, peer mentoring, and lunch buddies. These strategies can be implemented in multiple settings including the classroom, cafeteria, or within an extracurricular context (Carter, Hughes, Guth, & Copeland, 2005).

Why Peer Mediated Supports are important in Transition Planning?

Peer mediated supports have been identified as a research based practice for promoting academic learning and social relationships in adolescents with developmental disabilities (Carter & Kennedy, 2006). Academic and social skills have been identified as predictors of positive post-school outcomes (Mazzotti, Rowe, Sinclair, Poppen, Woods, & Shearer, 2015). Peer mediated supports are a potential intervention that can be used to improve these skills in students with disabilities.

What Does the Literature Say About Peer Mediated Supports in Transition Planning?

The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to provide educators with sources that define peer mediated supports and offer suggestions for how to implement peer mediated supports as an intervention for students with disabilities.

The following information is organized by the following categories; peer support arrangements, peer support strategies and access to general education curriculum, peer networks, peer partnerships, and professional development/”how to”.

References

Carter, E.W., Hughes, C., Guth, C., & Copeland, S.R. (2005). Factors influencing social interaction among high school students with intellectual disabilities and their general education peers. *American Journal on Mental Retardation, 110*, 366–377.

Carter, E.W., & Kennedy, C.H. (2006). Promoting access to the general curriculum using peer support strategies. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 31*, 284–292.

Carter, E. W., Sisco, L. G., Chung, Y.-C., & Stanton-Chapman, T. L. (2010). Peer Interactions of Students with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Autism: A Map of the Intervention Literature. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 35*, 63-79.

Mazzotti, V. L., Rowe, D. A., Sinclair, J., Poppen, M., Woods, W. E., & Shearer, M. L. (2015). Predictors of Post-School Success: A systematic review of NLTS2 secondary analyses. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, 15*, 1-20. doi: 10.1177/2165143415588047

Peer Support Arrangements

Brock, M. E., Biggs, E. E., Carter, E. W., Cattey, G. N., & Raley, K. S. (2016). Implementation and generalization of peer support arrangements for students with severe disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *Journal of Special Education, 49*, 221-232.

- A study on training paraprofessionals to step back and encourage peer support in instructional settings
- Researchers examined the effects of peer support arrangements on student’s ability to complete work independently, make choices, and typing skills

Carter, E. W., Moss, C. K., Hoffman, A., Chung, Y.-C., & Sisco, L. (2011). Efficacy and social validity of peer support arrangements for adolescents with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 78*, 107-125.

- Study examined the validity and acceptability of peer support arrangements as a way to promote school participation for students with significant disabilities.
- Measured the quality of social interactions, academic engagement, and support behaviors.
- Students made improvements in peer interactions while peer partners provided academic and social supports to students with disabilities. Peer partners' academic engagement did not decrease.

Carter, E. W., Asmus, J., Moss, C. K., Biggs, E. E., Bolt, D. M., Born, T. L., ... Weir, K. (2016). Randomized evaluation of peer support arrangements to support the inclusion of high school students with severe disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 82, 209-231.

- Randomized group experiment to investigate the efficacy of peer support arrangements on academic and social outcomes for students with severe disabilities.
- Peer partners were trained to provide academic and social assistance by special education teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Participants with disabilities increased social interactions and participation with peers, academic engagement, progress on social goals, and a greater number of new friendships.
- In addition, many of the relationships continued for one or two semesters following intervention.

Hughes, C., Harvey, M., Cosgriff, J., Reilly, C., Heilingoetter, J., Brigham, N., ... Bernstein, R. (2013). A peer-delivered social interaction intervention for high school students with autism. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 38, 1-16.

- Study examined the effects of training students without disabilities a prompting strategy on the number of interactions they initiated with peers with autism.
- Researchers measured the frequency of initiation, duration of social interactions, and goal setting.
- The partners set a goal of how many interactions they wanted to have with their peer with autism.
- Social interaction increased among the peers to a normative range represented between general education students in a general education setting.

Peer Support Strategies and Access to General Education Curriculum

Carter, E. W., Cushing, L. S., Clark, N. M., & Kennedy, C. H. (2005). Effects of peer support interventions on students' access to the general curriculum and social interactions. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 30, 15-25.

- Investigated effects of altering the number of participating peers on social and academic outcomes of students with and without disabilities.
- When students with disabilities worked with two peers as opposed to just one, they increased social interactions and contact with general education curriculum.

Carter, E. W., & Kennedy, C. H. (2007). Promoting access to the general curriculum using peer support strategies. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 31, 284-292.

- Article discussed how peer support arrangements can help students with severe disabilities engage in a meaningful way with general education curriculum and promote academic success for their peer partners.
- Described the peer support arrangement, how to implement, and the research supporting its effectiveness in improving academic engagement and social benefits.

Carter, E. W., Sisco, L. G., Melekoglu, M. A., & Kurkowski, C. (2008). Peer supports as an alternative to individually assigned paraprofessionals in inclusive high school classrooms. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 32, 213-227.

- Examined the effects of peer supported interventions as an alternative to one on one paraprofessional support in high school science and art classes.
- Students with severe disabilities demonstrated increases in peer interactions when working with a peer support as opposed to working with an adult.
- Level of academic engagement from both students with and students without disabilities did not decrease as a result of participation.

Peer Networks

Gardner, K. F., Carter, E. W., Gustafson, J. R., Hochman, J. M., Harvey, M. N., Mullins, T. S., & Fan, H. (2014). Effects of peer networks on the social interactions of high school students with autism spectrum disorders. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 39, 100-118.*

- Investigated the efficacy and validity of peer network interventions on promoting social interactions and social skills for high school students with autism.
- Researchers measured social interactions, social engagement, and progress on social related goals.
- Peer network meetings were conducted where the focus student was present along with peer partners.
- Both participants substantially increased peer interactions.

Hochman, J. M., Carter, E. W., Bottema-Beutel, K., Harvey, M. N., & Gustafson, J. R. (2015). Efficacy of peer networks to increase social connections among high school students with and without autism spectrum disorder. *Exceptional Children, 82, 96-116.*

- Examined the effects of a lunchtime peer network intervention on the social engagement and interactions of adolescents with ASD.
- Peer partners were recruited and trained along with adult facilitators.
- Following training an orientation meeting was held so students had an opportunity to mingle and get to know each other.
- Weekly network meetings were held during the regularly scheduled 30 minute lunch period.
- Researchers and trained observers measured the number of social interactions, amount of social engagement, progress on social-related goals, proximity of participants to peer partner, facilitator support behaviors, and social comparison data to establish a range of typical social interactions in the cafeteria.
- Results showed an increase in peer interactions and social engagement across all participants.

Peer Partner Programs

Carter, E. W., Swedeen, B., & Moss, C. K. (2009). Supporting extracurricular involvement for youth with disabilities. *Exceptional Parent, 39, 32-33.*

- Despite the fact that IDEA mandates that IEP teams should consider what services and supports are needed for students with disabilities to “participate in extracurricular and other non-academic activities,”

this aspect of the school day often goes overlooked.

- Authors discuss why participation in extracurricular activities are important for the development of students with disabilities and the reasons why involvement is often overlooked.
- Finally the authors make recommendations about how to incorporate students with disabilities in extracurricular activities.

Copeland, S. R., McCall, J., Williams, C. R., Guth, C., Carter, E. W., Presley, J. A., ... Hughes, C. (2002). High school peer buddies: a win-win situation. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 35*, 16-21.

- Examined teachers' perceptions of implementing peer support arrangements in schools.
- Major themes included: benefits of participating in peer support programs for students with disabilities, general education peers, and teachers; challenges faced in implementing peer supports in school; and recommendations for others interested in having general education peers support high school students with disabilities.

Professional Development (How to)

Carter, E. W., Asmus, J., & Moss, C. K. (2013). Fostering friendships: Supporting relationships among youth with and without developmental disabilities. *Prevention Researcher, 20*, 14-17.

- A strategies article which defines peer support arrangements, peer networking, and peer partnerships.
- Offers suggestions and strategies on how to implement the strategies in a variety of instructional settings.

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