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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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Florida Department of Education
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Introduction



Students: Our Most Valuable Resource

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.¹ But while the model is effective,² using paid adults as the *only* option for support can be limiting³ 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.⁴ 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.^{5 6}

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.⁷ Using peers to support one another creates a cooperative classroom community where all students have value and rely on one another.⁸

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!

FLORIDA INCLUSION NETWORK

Section 1



How to Use This Guide

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.

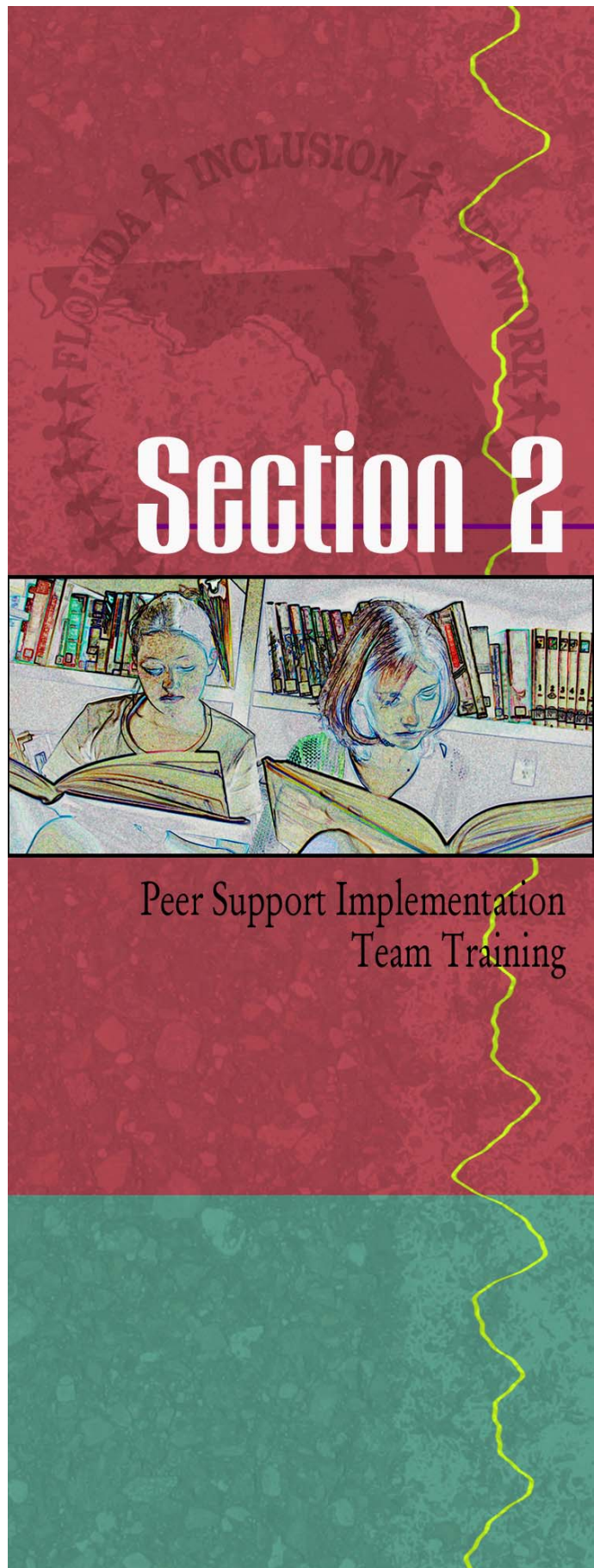
Section 6: This section contains recommended resources and references to help with your peer support program.

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.



Section 2

Peer Support Implementation
Team Training

Peer Support Program Team Training


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

● ————— Session 1 ————— ●		
Time	Content/Purpose/Activity	Materials
5 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review agenda. ● Use “Two Truths and a Lie” activity to provide team introductions, discuss change, and build the team. ● Debrief activity. 	<p>*PowerPoint slides can be viewed with an LCD projector or printed as overhead transparencies.</p> <p>PowerPoint slides 1-5 3” x 5” card for each person; pencil or pen</p>

10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide overview of inclusion. • Introduce peer support program: definition, benefits, pilot program. • Review program development getting started. 	PowerPoint slides 6-24
10 min. 35 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <i>Implementation Plan</i> (IP) development and steps 1-5. • Teams complete <i>IP</i> step 2: Vision statement; modify and adapt to fit your school. • Create core beliefs, guiding principles, and a program title (time permitting, or assign as “homework” for the team). 	PowerPoint slides 25-38 <i>Implementation Plan</i> form (Section 3) PowerPoint slide 39, 3” x 5” Post-It® notes, Pencils, markers, and chart paper
 <h2 style="margin: 0;">Session 2</h2>		
Time	Content/Purpose/Activity	Materials
		*PowerPoint slides can be viewed with an LCD projector or printed as overhead transparencies.
10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review agenda. • Use “Peanut Activity” to develop an awareness of the similarities and differences within a group and build the team. 	PowerPoint slides 40 & 41 PowerPoint slide 42 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bag of peanuts in shells • A blank Venn diagram and a pencil for each person (p. ___) • A plastic cup or bowl for each group
15 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <i>Implementation Plan</i> steps 6-11; describe specific planning and implementation steps and timelines. 	PowerPoint slides 43-52
35 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams work on <i>IP</i> steps 3-5. Assign incomplete work as “homework” for the team. 	PowerPoint slide 53 <i>Implementation Plan</i> form

●—————● Session 3

Time	Content/Purpose/Activity	Materials *PowerPoint slides can be viewed with an LCD projector, or printed as overhead transparencies
10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review agenda. • Use “Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates” activity to demonstrate the problems with judging someone based on appearance only. 	PowerPoint slide 54 PowerPoint slide 55 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box of assorted, soft-centered chocolates (e.g., Whitman’s crème-filled); one piece of candy per person • Paper and pencils
10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <i>Implementation Plan</i> steps 12-15. • Review “Hiccups,” “Tweaking” your program, and celebrating success. 	PowerPoint slides 56-63 PowerPoint slides 64-67
30 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams work on <i>IP</i> steps 6 & 7. Assign incomplete work as “homework” for the team. • Exit Card • End quote 	PowerPoint slide 68 <i>Implementation Plan Form</i> PowerPoint slide 69 PowerPoint slide 70
10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule future meetings and determine next steps (e.g., completing the <i>Implementation Plan</i>, site visits, technical assistance, getting administrative support) 	

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

Session 1

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:

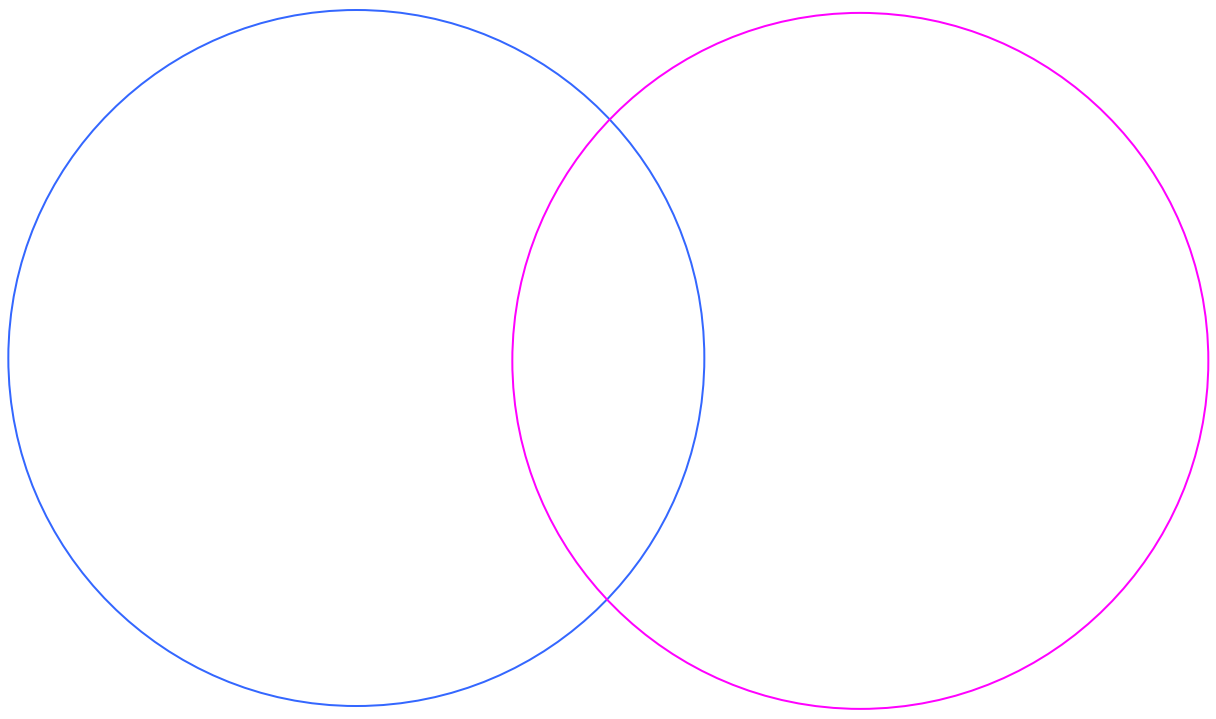
- Step 1:** Form small groups (about six each) around a table.
- Step 2:** Choose a peanut from the cup.
- Step 3:** Examine your peanut, noting its characteristics. Write a detailed description of your peanut.
- Step 4:** Put all the peanuts in the center of the table and mix them up.
- Step 5:** Now, 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:

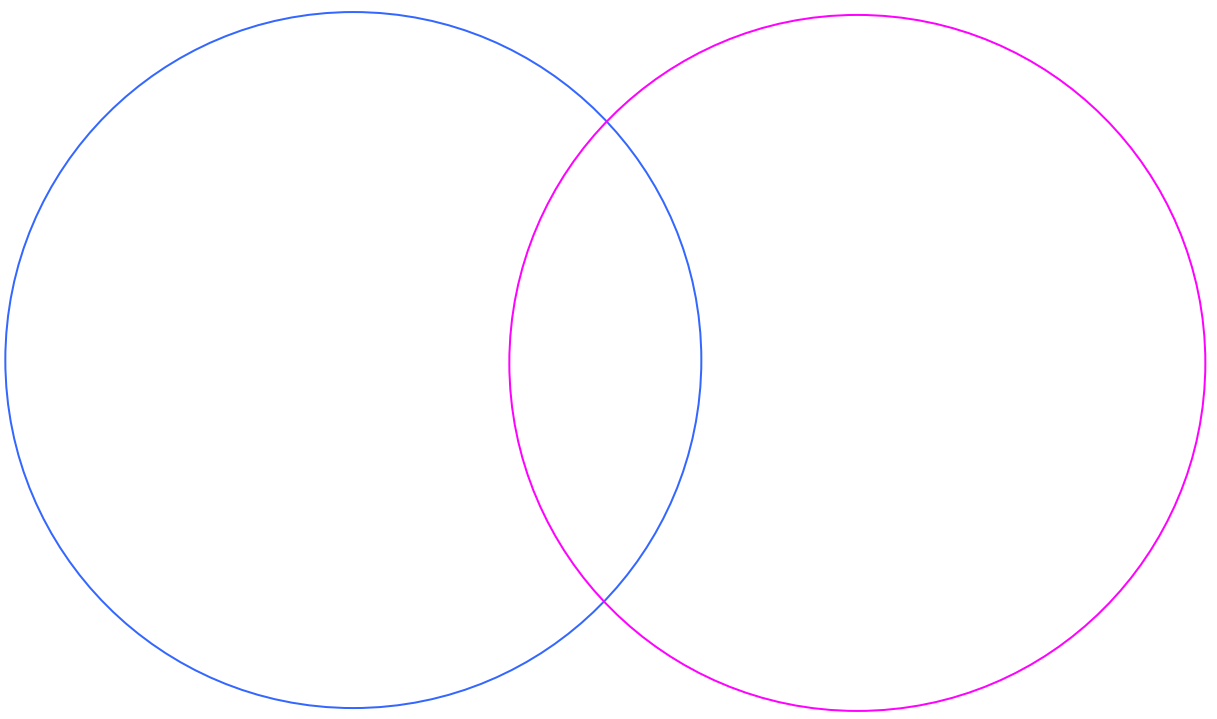
- Did you find your peanut? How did you recognize it?
- In what ways was your peanut the same as all the others? In what ways was it different?
- Did these differences change the value of your peanut?
- Would these differences affect what your peanut is like inside?
- Did you think your peanut would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

Adapted from: Katz, L., Sax, C., & Fisher, D. (2000). *Activities for a diverse classroom: Connecting students*. Colorado Springs, CO: PEAK Publications.

• — **PEANUT A** — **PEANUT B** — •



• — **PERSON A** — **PERSON B** — •



Session 3

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?

Source: Katz, L., Sax, C., & Fisher, D. (2000). *Activities for a diverse classroom: Connecting students*. Colorado Springs, CO: PEAK Publications.

**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

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SESSION 2

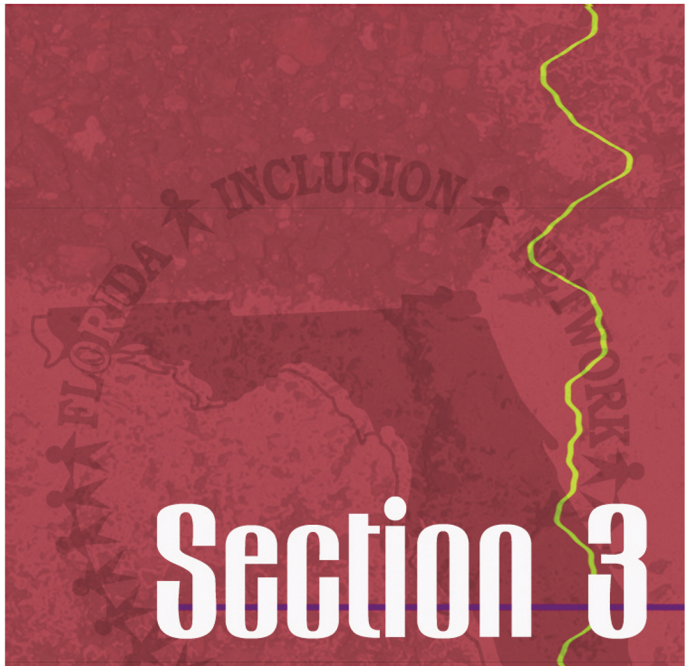
- Teambuilding activity
- Preview Implementation Plan steps 6 - 11
- Helpful tools and resources
- Team implementation planning, steps 3, 4, & 5

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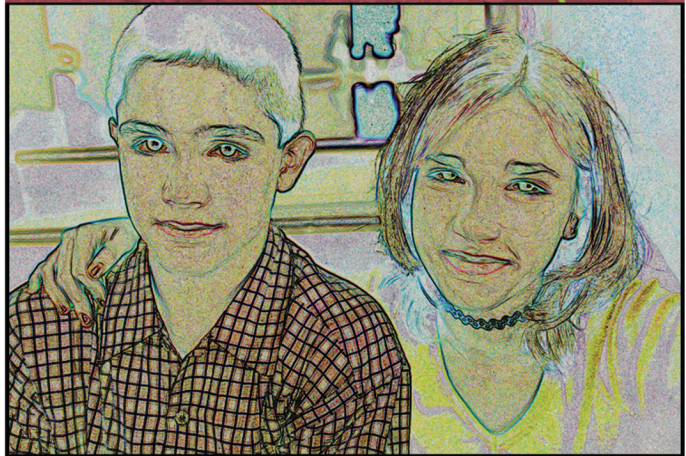
SESSION 3

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

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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.



Section 3

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, fields 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

School: _____
 District: _____

Peer Support Program Implementation Plan

Date: _____
 Contact Person/Phone: _____

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
Step 1. Recruit Peer Support <i>Planning Team</i> members.				Guide, Section 1 Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)
Step 2. Create a vision statement, principles, core beliefs, and name for the program.				Appendices A & B
Step 3. Obtain administrative support.				Guide, Section 2
Step 4. Organize team procedures. 4a. Establish a meeting schedule. 4b. Establish team communication methods. 4c. Establish timelines for				Guide, Section 3 School calendar School calendar

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
recruitment, selection, and training of peer assistants. 4d. Establish timeline for selecting ESE peers. 4e. Establish timelines for implementing the program.				School calendar School calendar
Step 5. Identify team professional development needs.				Guide, Section 3 FIN District ESE FDLRS
Step 6. Develop program specifications. 6a. Develop eligibility criteria for peer assistants. 6b. Develop list of roles and responsibilities for peer assistants. 6c. Determine the process for peer assistant advertising, application, and training.				Appendix C Appendix D Appendices E, F, & G

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
<p><i>For secondary:</i></p> <p>6d. Develop a grading system.</p> <p>6e. Determine district/state course name and code and analyze teacher certification requirements for the course</p>				<p>Appendix H</p> <p>Appendix I</p>
<p>Step 7. Develop or adapt forms for use in program:</p> <p>7a. Application form</p> <p>7b. Teacher recommendations</p> <p>7c. Letters to parents</p> <p>7d. Peer assistant activity logs.</p>				<p>Appendix E</p> <p>Appendix F</p> <p>Appendix G</p> <p>Appendix J</p>

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
<p>Step 8. Develop a budget and obtain funding.</p> <p>8a. Identify cost of team training activities.</p> <p>8b. Identify cost of desired program incentives (T-shirts, field trips).</p> <p>8c. Identify cost of program materials (notebooks, etc.).</p> <p>8d. Identify funding sources.</p>				<p>School administrator, Bookkeeper, FIN; District ESE</p>
<p>Step 9. Select ESE students to receive support.</p> <p>9a. Identify ESE students who could benefit from support.</p> <p>9b. Notify parents.</p> <p>9c. Review IEPs to assure compliance with delivery models, supports and schedule changes.</p> <p>9d. Schedule IEP revisions if necessary.</p>				<p>ESE Teachers</p> <p>ESE Student Records</p> <p>Parent Notification/Invitation Forms</p>

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
<p>Step 10. Recruit students to fulfill peer assistant roles.</p> <p>10a. Inform faculty about peer assistant program and application process.</p> <p>10b. Inform students about the program application/parent permission process.</p> <p>10c. Make program applications/parent permission forms available.</p> <p>10d. Analyze completed applications and select peer assistants using selection criteria.</p>				<p>Guide, Section 3</p> <p>Appendices C - G</p>
<p>Step 11. Match ESE students with peer assistants.</p> <p>11a. Review schedules and needs of both ESE students and peer assistants.</p> <p>11b. Match students according to needs and schedules.</p>				<p>Guide, Section 3</p> <p>ESE Teachers; Peer Assistant prior grades; Guidance Counselor(s)</p>

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
11c. Send written notification of students' program enrollment and schedule change requests to parents. 11d. Complete student schedule change forms for data entry personnel.				
Step 12. Schedule and conduct peer assistant training throughout the school year. 12a. Locate materials. 12b. Gather information on each ESE student to share with peer assistants during training.				Guide Section 4
Step 13. Collect evaluation data throughout the year: 13a. Parent surveys 13b. Student and teacher surveys 13c. Student grades 13d. Discipline referrals 13e. Interviews.				Appendix K

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
<p>Step 14. Determine incentives & celebrations for all participating students, families, and staff:</p> <p>14a. End-of-year party or picnic</p> <p>14b. Field trips</p> <p>14c. Fundraisers</p> <p>14d. Other.</p>				<p>Guide, Section 3</p>
<p>Step 15. Publicize program success:</p> <p>15a. School newsletters</p> <p>15b. Local media (go through your district's communications office)</p> <p>15c. Local and state conference presentations</p> <p>15d. Articles in professional publications</p> <p>15e. Post success stories on FIN website.</p>				<p>Guide, Section 3</p> <p>District ESE, District media communications administrator, FIN, school website, PTA</p>

STEPS	DECISIONS/ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES
Other:				
Other:				
Other:				

Team member names/titles:

FLORIDA INCLUSION NETWORK

Section 4



Peer Assistant Training

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

Section 4

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.

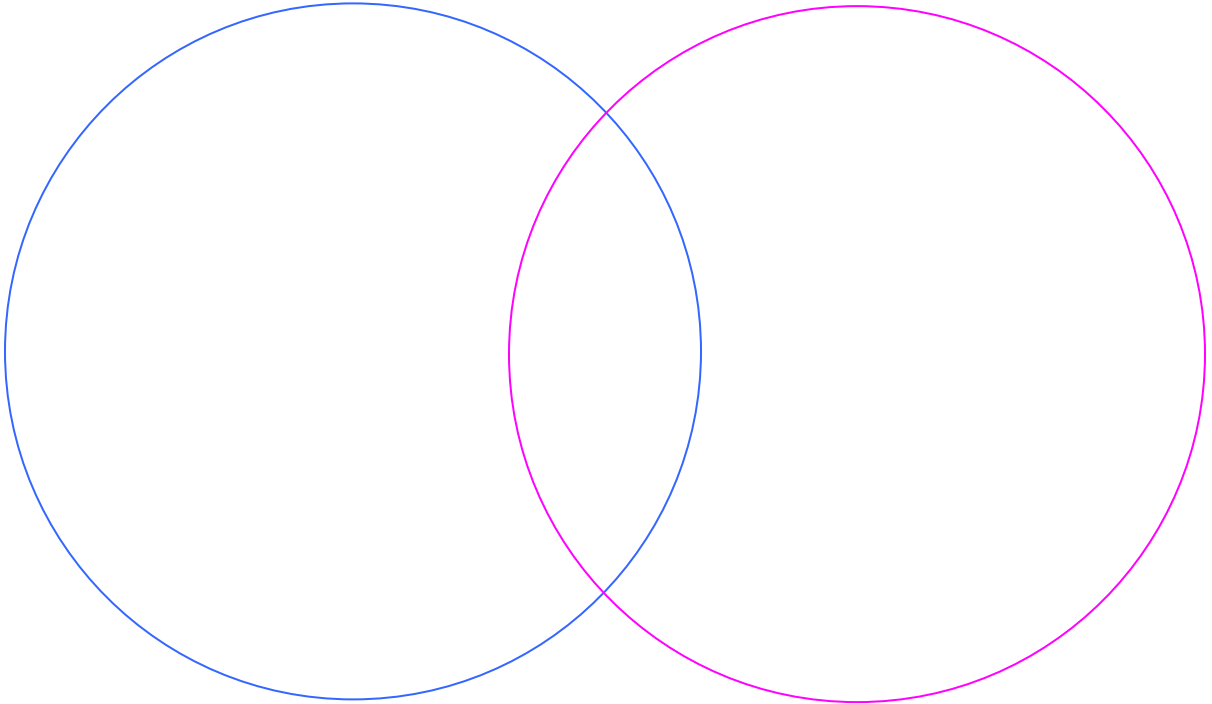
Step 9: With your partner, take a blank Venn diagram and fill in the circles according to your differences and similarities as people.

Discussion questions:

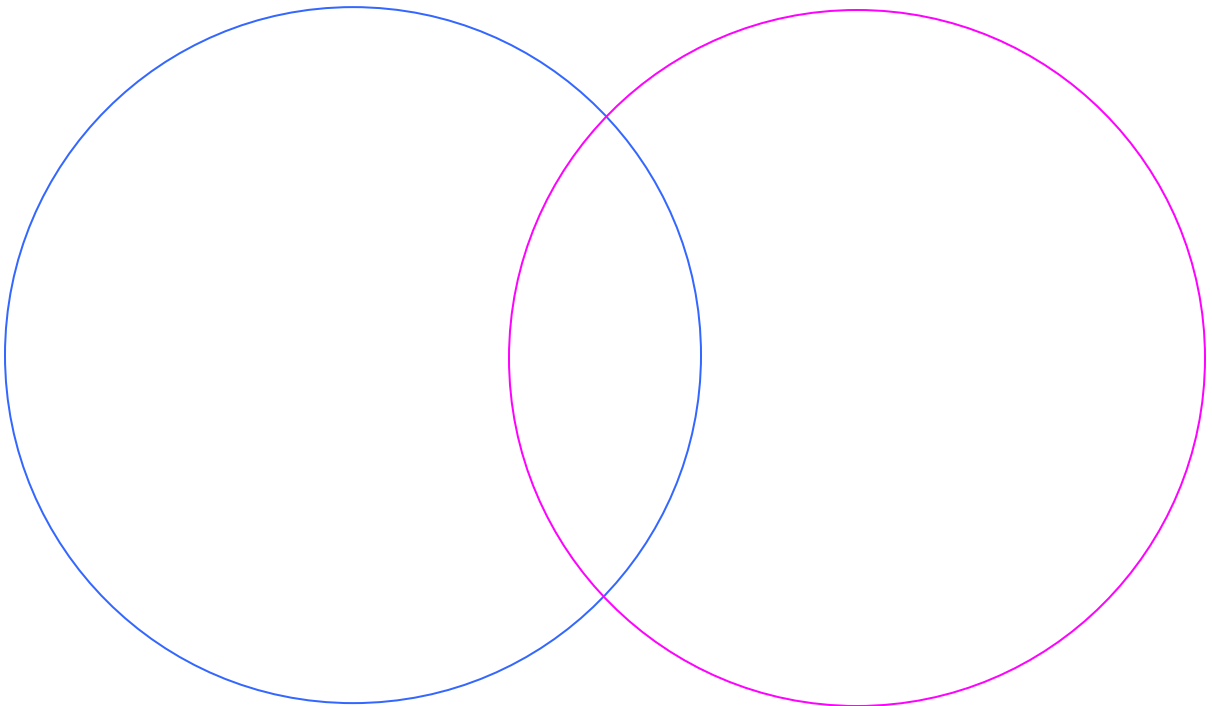
- Did you find your peanut? How did you recognize it?
- In what ways was your peanut the same as all the others? In what ways was it different?
- Did these differences change the value of your peanut?
- Would these differences affect what your peanut is like inside?
- Did you think your peanut would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

Adapted from: Katz, L., Sax, C., & Fisher, D. (2000). *Activities for a diverse classroom: Connecting students*. Colorado Springs, CO: PEAK Publications.

• — **PEANUT A** — **PEANUT B** — •



• — **PERSON A** — **PERSON B** — •



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!

Source: Katz, L., Sax, C., & Fisher, D. (2000). *Activities for a diverse classroom: Connecting students*. Colorado Springs, CO: PEAK Publications.

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.)

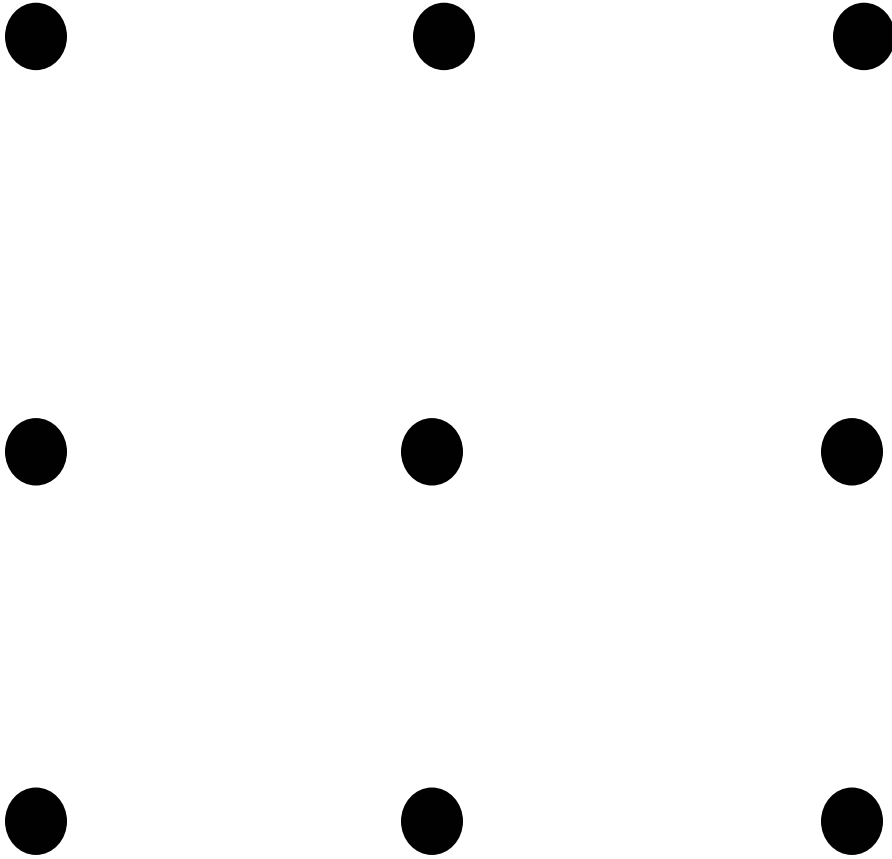
Step 4: Now show your group your solutions. Think “outside the box.”

Step 5: (Wait to see if anyone gets the solution. Show the rest of the group.)

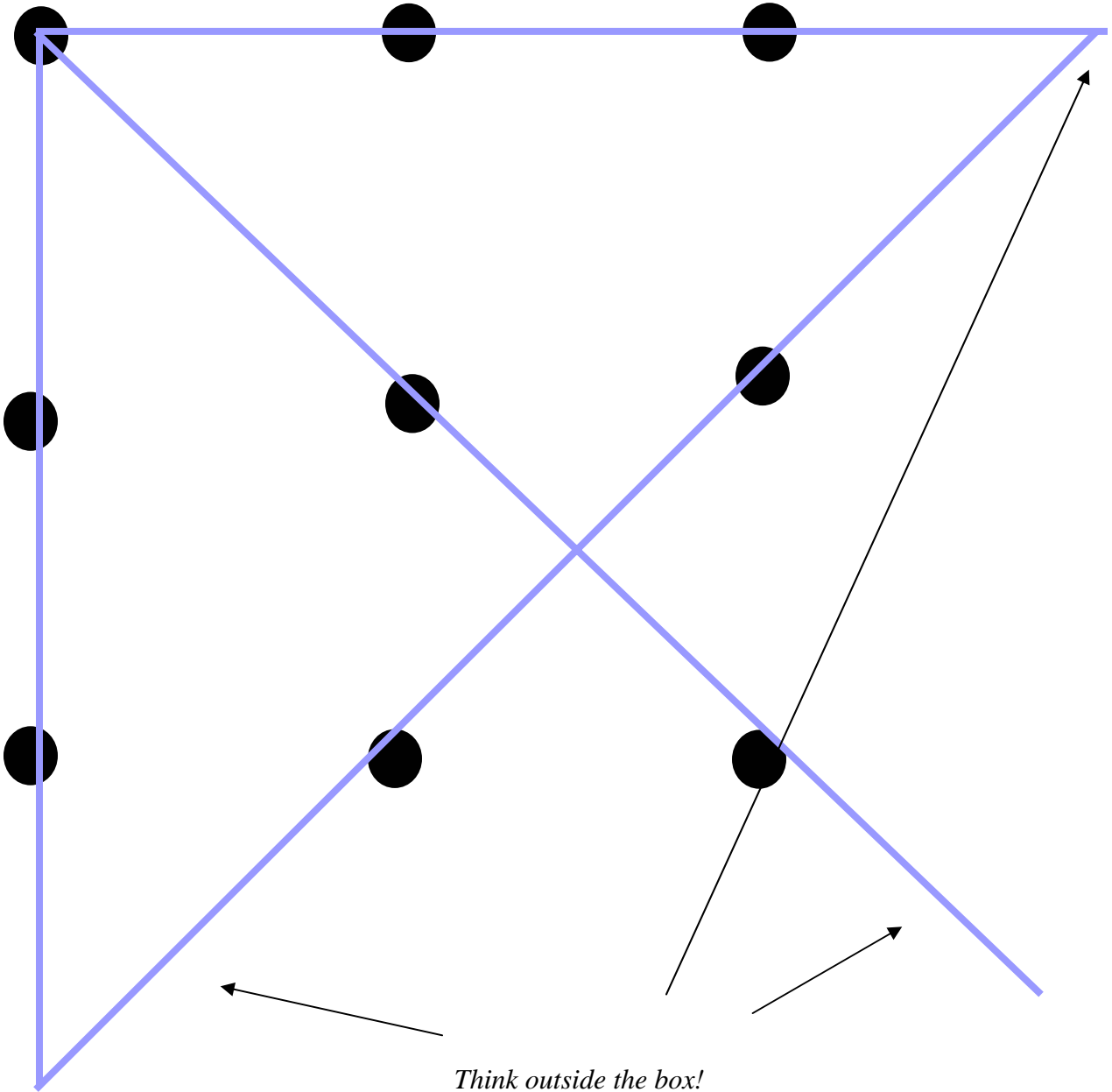
Discussion questions:

- 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)



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:

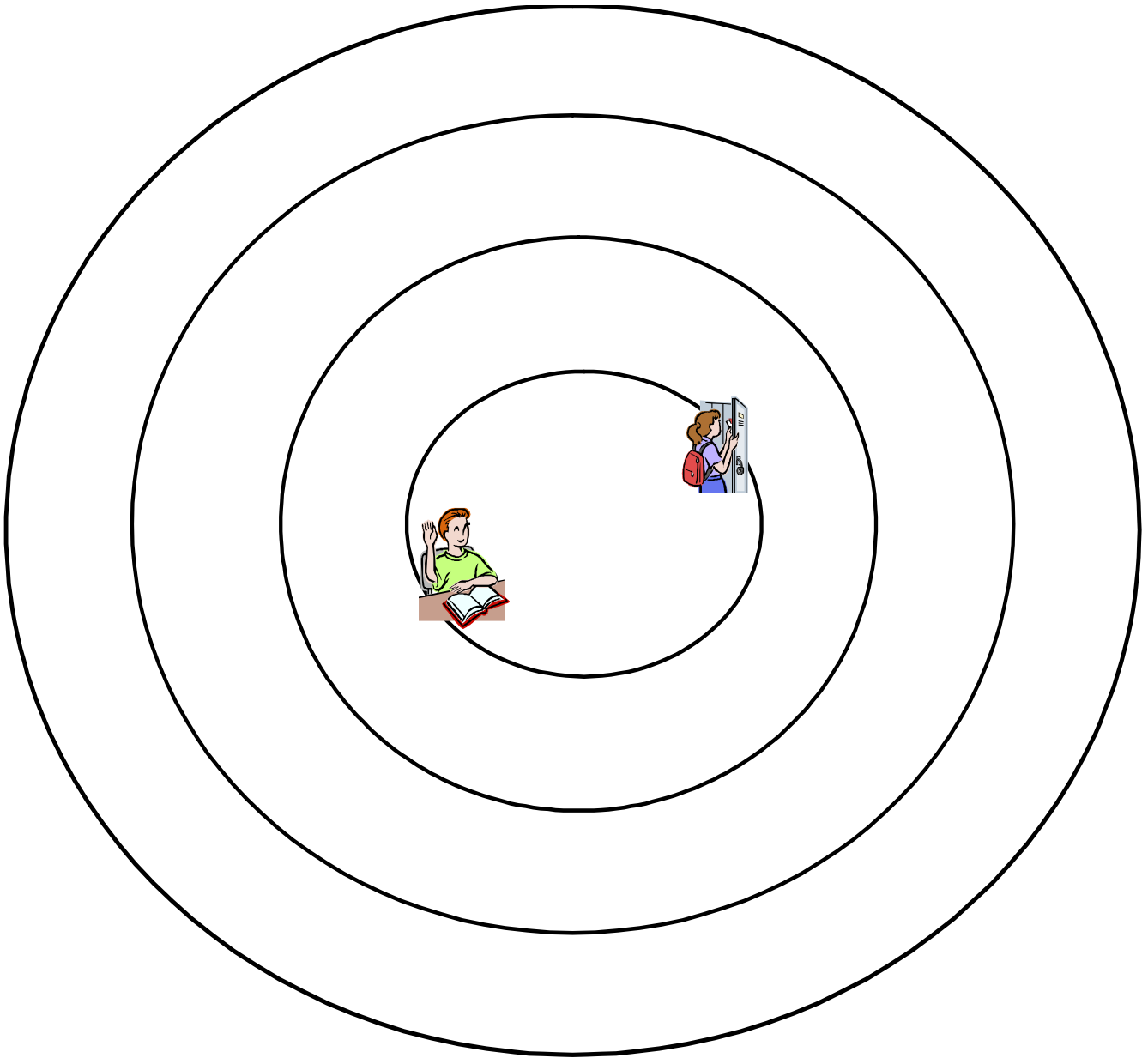
- Step 1:** Write your name or initials in the center circle.
- Step 2:** In the same circle, write the names or initials of your closest friend(s) and family members, the people you love the most.
- Step 3:** In the next circle write the names or initials of your other good friends and extended family 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
- Book: *The Teacher's Resource Guide* (S. B. McCarney, Hawthorne Publishing, 1994)

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
- Book: *The Teacher's Resource Guide* (S .B. McCarney, Hawthorne Publishing, 1994)
- 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:

- Book: *The Teacher's Resource Guide* (S. B. McCarney, Hawthorne Publishing, 1994)
- 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
- Book: *The Teacher's Resource Guide* (S. B. McCarney, Hawthorne Publishing, 1994)
- 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
- Book: *The Teacher's Resource Guide* (S. B. McCarney, Hawthorne Publishing, 1994.)
- 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 _____."

Section 5



Appendices

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

Section 5

Appendices

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.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE ADVERTISING FLYER TEXT

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 _____.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT APPLICATION/PARENT PERMISSION FORM

SECONDARY 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.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**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

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.

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS: SECONDARY LEVEL

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: _____

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS: ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The (NAME OF YOUR PROGRAM) is a new program being offered at (school name.) The goal of the program is to encourage positive interactions between students with disabilities and their fellow students. Through the program, peer assistants will be helping students with disabilities during instructional and noninstructional activities.

Your child is interested in this program and received an application packet. Each student must return the completed application with the signed parent permission form. The qualifications and responsibilities of peer assistants are included in the application. We may not be able to accept all interested students into the program. Students will be selected using the enrollment qualifications. You will be notified if your child is chosen to be in the program.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the program.

Sincerely,

Peer Assistant Program Coordinator

Phone: _____

Best time to reach me is: _____

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

Week of:	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Assisting Students		
Journal Entries		
Weekly Log		
Attending Training		
Quarterly Project		
Total		
Grade		

Example of a Peer Assistant's Weekly Grade

Week of: 9/15/03	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Assisting Students	18	20
Journal Entries	10	10
Weekly Log	9	10
Attending Training	25	25
Total	62	65
Grade	62/65=97%=A	

Week of: 9/22/03	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Assisting Students	20	20
Journal Entries	4	10
Weekly Log	7	10
Attending Training	0	0
Total	31	40
Grade	31/40=72.5%= low C	

SAMPLE BLANK PEER ASSISTANT GRADE LOG

Name of Peer Assistant: _____ Quarter: _____

Week of:	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Assisting Students		
Journal Entries		
Weekly Log		
Attending Training		
Total		
Grade		

Week of:	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Assisting Students		
Journal Entries		
Weekly Log		
Attending Training		
Total		
Grade		

Week of:	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Assisting Students		
Journal Entries		
Weekly Log		
Attending Training		
Total		
Grade		

Week of:	Points Awarded	Points Possible
Assisting Students		
Journal Entries		
Weekly Log		
Attending Training		
Total		
Grade		

APPENDIX I

Name of Peer Assistant: _____ Quarter: _____

FLORIDA *COURSE CODES
(See the Department of Education website for complete course code descriptions: www.fldoe.org)

SAMPLE MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH DOE COURSE CODES

M/J Peer Counseling 1 - # 1400000
M/J Peer Counseling 2 - #1400010
M/J Research 1 - # 1700000
M/J Research 2 - # 1700010
M/J Research 3 - # 1700020

SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL DOE COURSE CODES

Exploratory Teaching 1 - #0500340
Exploratory Teaching 2 - #0500350
Voluntary Public Service - #0500370
Peer Counseling 1 - #1400300
Peer Counseling 2 - #1400310
Peer Counseling 3 - #1400320
Peer Counseling 4 - #1400330
Research 1 - #1700300
Research 2 - #1700310

**Check with your school's administration to ensure that select courses are appropriate for your specific program goals and teacher certification requirements are met.*

APPENDIX J

SAMPLE PEER ASSISTANT WEEKLY LOG

Week of ___/___/___ Name of Peer Assistant _____

Day of the week	Name of Peer(s)	Understanding task	Aid with directions	Focus/ on-task	Organization	Reading text	Notes
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**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 \checkmark in the box indicating your response to the following statements:

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

Comments/Recommendations:

Peer Assistant Survey

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

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

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 \checkmark in the box that best describes your opinion. We also welcome your comments below.

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

Comments:

Peer Support Program Data Collection

Name of school: _____ Elem. M.S. H.S.
(circle one)

District: _____ Contact Name/Title: _____

Contact phone or email: _____

Number of ESE students enrolled in the program: _____

Population(s) of ESE students enrolled in the program: _____

Number of Gen. Ed. students enrolled in the program: _____

Number or percent 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

	Letter Grades (all courses)	No. of grades Quarter _____ (not enrolled in program)	No. of grades Quarter _____ (enrolled in program)
Student A (ESE)	A		
	B		
	C		
	D		
	F		
Student B (Gen. Ed.)	A		
	B		
	C		
	D		
	F		
Student C ("At risk")	A		
	B		
	C		
	D		
	F		

Attendance and Discipline Referrals for Students Enrolled in the Peer Support Program

Student Name (* denotes ESE)	Days Absent During Quarter _____ (not enrolled in program)	Days Absent During Quarter _____ (enrolled in program)	No. of Discipline Referrals Quarter _____ (not enrolled in program)	No. of Discipline Referrals Quarter _____ (enrolled in program)

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 than 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

Student Name:	Grade:
Nickname:	Diploma Option: <input type="checkbox"/> standard <input type="checkbox"/> special
Address:	Home Phone:
	Parent Name:
General Ed. Teacher(s)	Subject
ESE Consulting Teacher:	Paraprofessional:
<p>What does the student like? Dislike? What are the student's strengths?</p> 	
<p>What is the student's predominant learning style? (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile)</p> 	
<p>How does the student communicate? Does the student use an augmentative device?</p> 	
<p>Does the student have difficulty with specific academic activities? Describe.</p> 	
<p>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?</p> 	
<p>Is there a special reinforcer for the student? Describe:</p> 	

Student Learning Profile

What action might cause the student to become extremely stressed? (i.e. changing the student's schedule without visually warning the student)

What supports and accommodations have worked in the past or are necessary for success?

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)

Are there medical concerns or medication the team should know about?

What Assistive Technology does the student currently use?

What one or two things would make this a successful year for this student?

Is there another student in the class that seems to making friends with this student?

What other information should the team know about the student?

Student Interest Profile

All About _____	Comments
Age: _____ Grade: _____ Eye Color: _____ Hair Color: _____ Number of Brothers: _____ Ages: _____ Number of Sisters: _____ Ages: _____ Lives with (circle one): mom dad both parents grandparents guardian _____’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 Do you like school? _____ What is your favorite subject? _____ Why? _____ What is your least favorite subject? _____ Why? _____ What did you enjoy most about school last year? _____ Do you ever get in trouble at school? _____ If so, why? 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 _____	

The logo for the Florida Inclusion Network is a circular emblem. It features a map of Florida in the center, surrounded by the text "FLORIDA INCLUSION NETWORK" in a circular arrangement. There are small human figures with arms raised at the top and bottom of the circle. The background of the logo is a dark red color.

Section 6



Resources and References

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.

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- 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.
- <http://www.inclusiveschools.org/> - National Institute for Urban School Improvement –useful resources for inclusive schools; celebration kit for National Inclusive Schools Week (December).
- <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/161/161.pdf> – Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota – newsletter about inclusive communities.
- www.projectparticipate.org

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