

This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, learning coaches and teacher leaders or as a self-paced study to enhance the use of natural supports to increase the engagement of students with significant disabilities with the school community.

### Natural Supports: *In Conversation with Dr. Erik Carter*

This guide is intended to facilitate conversation



#### General synopsis

In this short video clip, Dr. Erik Carter discusses activities and supports that peer mentors should not provide.

#### Key understandings

- Peer mentors should support students with significant disabilities in tasks the mentors would naturally support any peer with.
- Behaviour management issues should be addressed by an adult and not a peer.
- Support in some personal tasks, such as grooming or feeding, should be assumed by an adult and not a peer.

#### Questions for discussion

- Are there some other types of supports that peer mentors should not provide?
- What happens to the relationship between peers when one of them assumes a role usually filled by an adult?

#### For more information

- For resources and training materials for mentoring, see: Alberta Mentoring Partnership website: <http://www.albertamentors.ca/>
- For an overview of the research on peer mentors for students with significant disabilities, see: Carter, E. (2011). Supporting peer relationships. In M. Snell & F. Brown (Eds.), *Instruction of students with severe disabilities* (pp. 431–460). Boston: Pearson.
- For practical information on peer buddies, see: Carter, E. (2008). *Peer buddy programs for successful school inclusion*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- For an overview of peer support techniques, see: Carter, E. (2008). Promoting rigor, relevance, and relationships through peer support interventions. *TASH Connections*, March/April, pp. 20–23. [http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/pdfs/Peer\\_Supports\\_TASH\\_Connections\\_2008.pdf](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/pdfs/Peer_Supports_TASH_Connections_2008.pdf)
- For examples of activities and materials related to natural supports, see: Natural Supports Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/resources.php>

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