

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 offers some tips on how to begin setting up natural peer mentoring arrangements in your school.

#### Key understandings

- Start small—one student, one class at a time—build success and then expand to more students and/or classes.
- Identify one or two priority areas where you could have a significant impact and focus on these priorities for a year.

#### Questions for discussion

- How are students with significant disabilities currently being supported in your school?
- Identify one or two opportunities in your school where a peer mentor might make a positive impact for students with significant disabilities.
- What will motivate students to become peer mentors?

#### 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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