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.

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 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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