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 explains why peer mentors have great potential for providing natural supports to students with significant disabilities.

Key understandings
• Peers are the most available and natural sources of support in any school.
• Peers are generally willing to provide some of the social and academic support needed by their classmates with significant disabilities.

Questions for discussion
• How might peer mentors provide social support for classmates with significant disabilities?
• How might peer mentors provide academic support for classmates with significant disabilities?

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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