

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 explains what is meant by a valued role and offers some questions to consider when determining if students with significant disabilities are being given valued roles.

Key understandings

- Healthy relationships are characterized by a sense of reciprocity, of both giving and receiving.
- Students with significant disabilities are often designated as receivers only.
- Students with significant disabilities need authentic opportunities to share their talents and strengths with peers.

Questions for discussion

- What are some factors to consider when determining if a role is a valued role?
- What are some benefits of giving valued roles to students with significant disabilities?
- Give some examples from your own experience of how students with significant disabilities have taken on valued roles within the school community.

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
- 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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