



PEER SUPPORT

INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM

In inclusive classrooms, peer supports are a great way to help meet the needs of all learners. While they can't take the place of individualized supports delivered by teachers and other members of a student's school team, they're an important supplemental strategy to to share with others.

What peer support strategies have you tried in your classroom? Here are 5 effective approaches that benefit students with and without disabilities, from *Social Relationships and Peer Support* by Rachel Janney & Martha Snell.

Look them over and think about which ones might be most helpful to your learners.

Peer modeling

- Peers provide recorded or live demonstrations of targeted social skills
- Situations modeled should be familiar ones that students are likely to encounter
- Peers explicitly tell the observing student what they are doing and why
- Can be used informally during the course of the day or during formal, structured learning sessions

Peer buddy systems

- Peers provide incidental teaching during nonstructured, routine classroom activities
- Many buddy systems in lower grades emphasize increasing and improving a student's communication with peers
- More formal, structured buddy programs may focus on instructional support for secondary school students during inclusive classes

Friendship groups

- Lunch, recess, or after-school groups explicitly designed to bring together students with disabilities and their peers for socialization and fun
- Work especially well when inclusion is minimal or if a student with disabilities is new to a school
- May meet weekly around specific themes like the homecoming dance or school grounds improvement
- Good opportunity to build social relationships and provide informal support channels for students with disabilities

Cooperative learning

- Students work in small, mixed-ability groups and support each other's learning
- Competition is deemphasized in favor of cooperation, mutual support, and shared accomplishments
- All group members work together toward a shared goal; group is successful only when each member achieves the goal

Peer tutoring

- Students get one-to-one instruction on a particular topic, assignment, or skill by a classmate, a peer, or an older student
- Peer tutoring programs can use fixed roles for students or allow them to alternate between tutor/tutee roles
- Especially effective in incremental learning, in which there's one correct answer that the tutor is able to guide the tutee toward



This tip sheet was created by Rockin Happy Rocks— We help support Autism Awareness and Education Visit our website at: www.rockinhappyrocks.com

Disclaimer: This information was created to help educate on popular topics using information from the websites of organizations specializing in research and educating for Autism. These are helpful tips that we found would be useful for you to know. By no means is it intended to prompt you to handle your challenges in any specific way, you should always seek out help from a professional service. Our journey is to help educate and bring Awareness to all our audiences and “Rock-A-Smile” .