

The STAR Buddy Program:

Utilizing Peers to Increase Skills of
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

A curriculum for primary school educators



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Emory Autism Center

In collaboration with



Troup County School System

Sally Delgado, EdD
Sharon Mines, BS

2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	4
SCOPE AND SEQUENCE	6
GETTING STARTED.....	7
STAR Buddy Support Committee.....	7
Identification of General Education Class(es).....	8
Parent/Guardian Involvement.....	9
STAR Buddy Program in the General Education Setting.....	10
STAR Buddy Program in the Separate Class Setting	13
IEP Goals	14
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS	15
Reinforcement for STAR Buddies.....	15
Rotation of STAR Buddies	15
Optional Participation.....	15
CURRICULUM EVALUATION	16
Teacher Survey	17
Parent of a Student with ASD Survey	18
Parent of Peer Survey	19
Student Survey.....	20
PEER EDUCATION	21
Lesson 1: Learning about My New Friends.....	22
Lesson 2: How We are Similar and Different from One Another	25
Lesson 3: We’re Amazing, 1, 2, 3!.....	27
Lesson 4: Showing Respect to Others.....	29
Lesson 5: Showing Compassion to Others.....	32
Lesson 6: STAR Buddies	34
TEACHING STUDENTS WITH ASD	37
STAR BUDDY SELECTION	39
INDIVIDUALIZED PEER TRAINING	40
COACHING/MENTORING	42
SUPPORT COMMITTEE MEETINGS.....	44
APPENDIX.....	45

Appendix A: Parent Permission Form 45

Appendix B: Surveys 46

Appendix C: Lesson Plan Resources..... 50

Appendix D: STAR Buddy Coaching Protocol..... 55

Appendix E: Support Committee Agenda Example 56

REFERENCES 57

INTRODUCTION

A Peer-Based Instruction and Intervention Curriculum

This curriculum is for primary school learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or students who could benefit from a curriculum that is based on Peer-Based Instruction and Intervention (PBII) (Steinbrenner et al., 2020). For the purpose of this curriculum, *primary school learners* refers to children that are in kindergarten-2nd grade. Students educated in a separate class setting (i.e., self-contained special education classroom) are highlighted. This curriculum was designed based on research that was conducted on best practices for children with autism. The findings of research studies showed that PBII is a promising means to support children with autism in general education settings with positive effects on academic, interpersonal, and personal-social development. For example, Brock, Dueker, and Barczak (2017) conducted a research study that showed students with ASD who received a peer-based intervention during recess increased overall peer interaction and appropriate play. Many other people have found similar findings from implementation of a PBII program. With that being said, the next questions is: *What is Peer-Based Instruction and Intervention?*

PBII is a practice in which students receive social learning through peer interaction, modeling, and reinforcement. PBII is designed to teach students with ASD and other developmental disabilities how to acquire new social skills by observing and learning from their peers. With PBII, peers are systematically taught ways of engaging learners with ASD in social interactions through both teacher-directed and learner-initiated activities (English et al., 1997; Odom et al., 1999).

One PBII was researched by Boyd and colleagues (2008) at a summer day camp in which peers were paired with a student with a disability and trained to perform a number of behaviors (“Stay, Talk, Assist, and Reward”; i.e., STAR) in order to increase engagement with the campers with special needs. The results showed an overall increase in the number of social interactions between campers with and without disabilities. Boyd’s study can be adapted to the school setting and be very effective in addressing poor social skills that are evident in many students with ASD.

This curriculum outlines how to implement the STAR Buddy program at a primary school with students educated in a separate class setting. Specifically the curriculum includes guidance on the peer selection for STAR Buddies; suggestions for when, where, and during what activities to utilize the program; goals for which the program addresses; assessment procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the program; 6 suggested lesson plans to introduce the

program to typical peers; methods for providing individualized training to STAR Buddies; and a protocol to use for ongoing coaching/monitoring of STAR Buddies.

It is suggested the curriculum be started within the first few weeks (about 8 weeks) of the school year in order to utilize the program throughout the school year. However, educators are encouraged to utilize modifications to the timeline when implementing the curriculum to meet individualized school or classroom needs.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

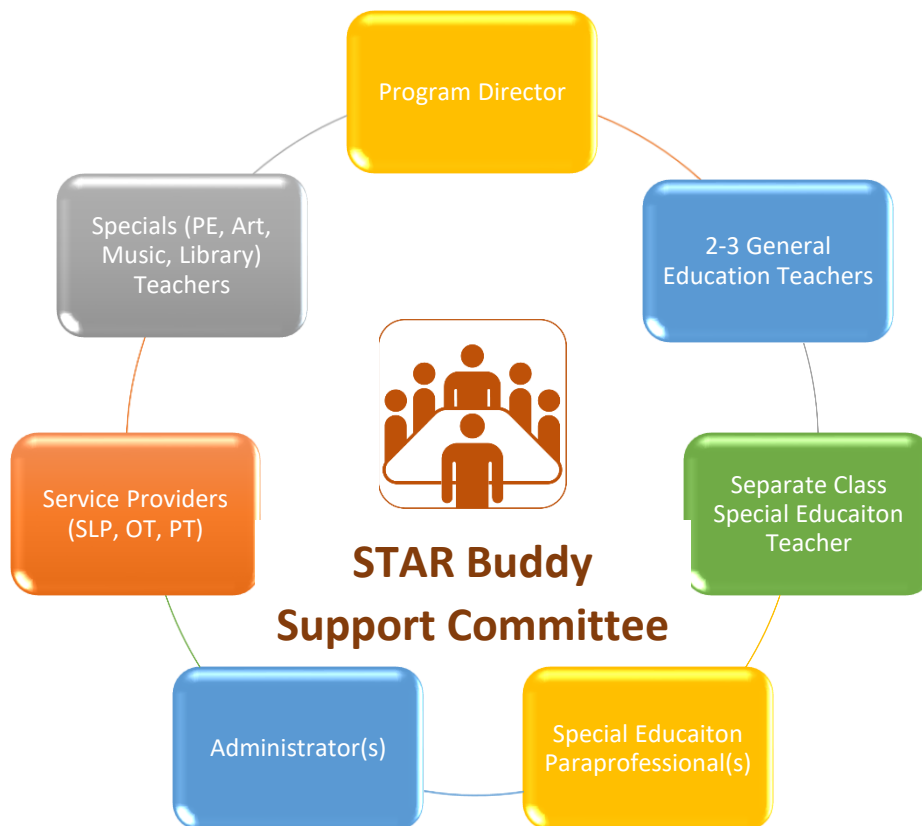
A Timeline for Implementation

	Implementation Component
Week 1	Identify STAR Buddy Support Committee STAR Buddy Support Committee Meeting
Week 2	Identify General Education Class(es) Conduct Pre-assessment Surveys
Week 3	STAR Buddy Support Committee Meeting-Review/Summarize Surveys General Education Class Implementation of Lessons 1-3
Week 4	General Education Class Implementation of Lessons 4-6 Distribute Parent Permission Forms
Week 5-6	Collect Parent Permission Forms STAR Buddy Support Committee Meeting- Peer Selection Process
Week 7	Individualized Peer Training
Week 8	Individualized Peer Training
Week 9	Program Activation STAR Buddy Support Committee Meeting
Every Other Week Thereafter	Coaching/Mentoring Check-ins with STAR Buddies
Once a Month Thereafter	STAR Buddy Support Committee Meeting
End of Program	Conduct Post-assessment Surveys STAR Buddy Support Committee Meeting-Review/Summarize Surveys

GETTING STARTED

Preparing for the Program

STAR Buddy Support Committee: At the start of the program, various stakeholders within the primary school setting should be identified to join the STAR Buddy Support Committee. This should include (but should not be limited to) 2-3 general education teachers, the separate class special education teacher, paraprofessionals from the separate class, service providers such as speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists, school administrator(s), and teachers of specials classes (e.g., Physical Education, Art, Music, Library). In addition to this team, an individual within the school setting should be identified as the Program Director to facilitate the implementation of the program as well as ensure the Support Committee meets on a regular basis. This committee should meet periodically (about once a month) to monitor the program's implementation and troubleshoot any problems/difficulties that may arise. A protocol for these meetings can be found in a subsequent section of this curriculum. In addition, the committee will be responsible for reviewing and summarizing assessment surveys, identifying peers to participate as STAR Buddies, and coaching/mentoring the Buddies throughout the program.



Identification of General Education Class(es): It is advised that the STAR Buddy Support Committee take extreme caution when considering which general education class(es) to pair with the students with ASD for the STAR Buddy program. The general education class(es) teacher(s) should become part of the STAR Buddy Support Committee. The general education class(es) should be selected with the following in mind:



Grade Level

- Select classrooms that contain students in primary grades (K-2) rather than elementary grades (3-5) in order to maintain similar age groups with peers.

Previous Working Relationship between Teachers

- If the separate, special education class teacher has a former working relationship with a general education teacher that is strong and well established it may support implementation of the program more effectively.

Homeroom

- If students with ASD are already assigned a general education classroom for the purposes of record keeping, etc. that/those classroom(s) should be selected.

Flexible Teacher

- Select a general education class that is taught by a flexible teacher who will be willing to include the students with ASD throughout the school day in new and innovative ways.

Class Make-up

- Select a general education class that contains students with limited behavior challenges and strong social communication skills. Also consider whether or not a class already containing a large special education population should be selected.

Parent/Guardian Involvement: Although not typically needed, please be aware that your county or system may require parental permission to use any peer-tutoring styled program at your school. As a core component of the STAR Buddy program, it is encouraged to provide multiple opportunities for student interactions in the special education and general education settings. Reversed inclusion involves bringing general education students out of their classrooms for short periods of time to interact socially with students with disabilities (Schoger, 2006). This type of work typically requires parent permission. The sample parent permission form seen below is provided in Appendix A for use as needed.



[insert date]

Dear Parents of Mrs. Lovingood's Class,

Our school is currently working to improve social programming for students in our special education classrooms and their peers. As part of this program, we are asking your permission for your child to participate.

Several of our students with disabilities are educated primarily in special education classrooms and have limited interactions with their general education classroom peers. The program, called the STAR Buddy program, is a peer training program to increase the interactions between students with disabilities and their peers. Students will be trained to talk and play with children with disabilities during playground or other activities. STAR stands for Stay, Talk, Assist, Reward. Teachers from the school will do this training, and your child may be asked to wear a button or sticker when they are the STAR student. No academic time will be affected and adults will always be supervising playground and other activities.

The program is expected to increase the number of chances a child with a disability has to play with non-disabled classmates, and hopefully make friends. Risks to your child are expected to be minimal and not exceed what is expected during any routine school activities.

Your child's participation in this program is voluntary and your child will not be penalized or lose any benefits that he/she are now entitled to do if you do decide not to have your child participate. You may also have your child stop participating at any time by notifying the school. Your child can also tell us if they want to stop participation in the program at any time as well, even if you give your permission.

No materials are needed for this program, beyond the STAR button or sticker, which will be provided by your child's teacher. You may ask to see the button or sticker ahead of time or ask to see more information about the STAR Buddy program.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact Suzy Martin (XXX-XXX-XXXX).

Sincerely,

Suzy Martin

Suzy Martin
School representative

I give permission for _____ County Schools and _____ (school name) to complete the STAR Buddy training, and to be involved with the social programming of my child, _____.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



STAR Buddy Program in the General Education Setting: The primary purpose of the STAR Buddy program is to increase social communication interactions between students with ASD and their peers. With that said, the ideal setting for those interactions to occur is in the general education classrooms. Students with ASD should be educated in general education settings to the maximum extent possible (as determined by Least Restrictive Environment provisions) according to federal law (i.e., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004).

“To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled”

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004

The STAR Buddy program should be utilized when students with ASD from the separate class setting participate in activities/lessons in the general education classroom as well as in extracurricular activity settings (e.g., specials, lunch, recess). For example, if the student with ASD’s general education class participates in a party celebration in the general education setting, the student with ASD should be supported by his/her STAR Buddy to successfully participate.

If the student with ASD does not participate in the general education setting at the start of the program, it is suggested that the general education teacher and separate class teacher identify consistent times/activities in the general education setting for which the student with ASD can participate. The general education teacher should prepare for how the student with ASD will be supported by his/her STAR Buddy for the activity. The following list provides settings and activities in which the general education teacher could purposefully plan to have a STAR Buddy support the student with ASD to participate successfully in the classroom:



The STAR Buddy and the student with ASD could greet peers as they enter the classroom each day. Having a visual of greeting options (e.g., high-five, hug) would be a great resource for students to select their preferred greeting.



The student with ASD could be responsible for passing out supplies or cleaning up after snack time. The STAR Buddy could assist/prompt the student with ASD in these tasks.



The STAR Buddy could assist the student with ASD in learning morning and afternoon routines (e.g., the STAR Buddy would model how to unpack and pack backpack items). Visual aids would provide additional support for tasks.



The STAR Buddy could model lunch routines such as getting a lunch tray, finding the assigned table, and opening items during lunch with the student with ASD.



The student with ASD could have daily or weekly jobs such as returning library books. The STAR Buddy could assist the student with ASD in collecting and returning the books.



The student with ASD could join for reward times in the classroom. The STAR Buddy would bring the student with ASD to join peers for fun centers, dance parties, extra recess, etc.



The student with ASD could join the class for computer center time. The STAR Buddy could be at the center to assist the student with logging in and finding the appropriate websites.



The student with ASD could join the class for recess. The STAR Buddy would model appropriate and safe indoor and outdoor recess activities (e.g., tossing a ball back and forth, playing with blocks/cars, playing tag).



The student with ASD could join the class for read alouds. The STAR Buddy could model appropriate listening and questioning skills as well as prompt the student with ASD for appropriate behaviors

Eventually, the general education teacher will not have to plan for as many tasks/activities for the STAR Buddy and student with ASD. The goal is for the STAR Buddy and student with ASD to form a natural, respectful, and reciprocal relationship. The STAR Buddy should look for opportunities throughout the day to invite the student with ASD to participate. STAR Buddies should be able to identify strengths and interests of the student with ASD and use that information to find appropriate opportunities for their friend to be invited to the general education classroom. For example, the STAR Buddy may say:

“Mrs. Smith, I know Sam loves computers, so I would like to invite her to join me when I’m at the computer station on Friday.”

“Mrs. Smith, do you think Jack could give each of us hand sanitizer on our way to lunch? We pass right by his door and it would give us a chance to see him in the middle of the day.”

“Mrs. Smith, the bookshelf is a mess! Sara loves to make things neat and tidy. Could I go ask her teacher if she could come help me straighten it up?”

“Mrs. Smith, I noticed that Bobby loves to listen to you read everyday during read aloud. Could I invite him down during independent reading center and read my library book to him?”

It is important that teachers ensure maximum success within each task/activity that the student with ASD participates. It is suggested that the teachers provide prior instruction regarding most tasks/activities to the student with ASD to acquire and apply skills prior to expecting them generalize those skills in the general education setting. For example, prior to

expecting the student with ASD to sit and attend a read aloud in the general education setting, the student should be taught how to perform these behaviors in the separate class setting. This type of instruction may also need to be taught by the separate class teacher or a supporting paraprofessional in the general education classroom before the STAR Buddy helps support the student with ASD in completing the task/activity if generalization in a new setting is difficult to obtain. For additional guidance and support on evidence-based strategies to teach these behaviors/skills, consider utilizing the Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM) (<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules>) created by The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

STAR Buddy Program in the Separate Class Setting: As mentioned previously regarding parent/guardian involvement, reversed inclusion is a suggested method to provide opportunities for students with ASD to interact with peers. The separate class teacher may wish to utilize activities, games, and lessons within his/her classroom in which the students' STAR Buddies would be invited to participate.

Using Structured Play Groups (Steinbrenner et al., 2020) is a specific way in which the separate class teacher may wish to involve STAR Buddies into the separate class setting. Structured Play Groups are used to teach a broad range of skills and behaviors to students with ASD. By selecting a small group of students including students who are typically developing (e.g., STAR Buddies), the special education teacher defines a space in the separate class setting for students to engage in structured routines and defined play activities. For more information regarding Structured Play Groups consider utilizing the Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM) (<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules>) created by The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

IEP Goals: The STAR Buddy program is designed to increase social communication interactions between students with ASD and their peers. Therefore, a number of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals may be addressed (e.g., taught and assessed) throughout the program's implementation. The following is a list of possible IEP goal topics/ideas in which the STAR Buddy program will address in multiple ways:

Maintaining proximity to peers during structured/unstructured play

Turn taking

Identify peers by name

Initiating and responding in conversation/greetings/salutations to peers

Engaging in cooperative play

Attend to task given peer prompting for redirection if needed

Follow whole group directives given peer prompting for redirection if needed

Accept changes to the routine given peer modeling of appropriate behaviors

Staying in a designated area

Performing motor actions to songs and fingerplays given peer modeling

Point to objects in order to bring another person's attention to it

Imitating 1-step sequenced actions with toys






Imitate functional play actions by peer modeling

Take/give item(s) offered by peer

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Extra Considerations

Reinforcement for STAR Buddies: The primary purpose of the STAR Buddy program is to foster genuine friendships between students with ASD and their peers. However, it is suggested that additional reinforcers be provided to peers in order to maintain their motivation for participation. The following are examples of how the STAR Buddy Support Committee may wish to provide reinforcement for participation from general education students:

-  provide award/certificate at the end of the year
-  give candy bar to STAR Buddies at the end of each week
-  have parties where STAR Buddies and students with ASD are invited to attend
-  have STAR Buddies wear special badges/lanyards to indicate their service as a buddy
-  recognize STAR Buddies during school wide announcements/assemblies

Rotation of STAR Buddies: It is highly suggested that STAR Buddies are used on a rotational basis. For example, for every student with ASD, at least two to three peers are selected to be his/her STAR Buddy. This allows the STAR Buddies to rotate on a daily/weekly basis to ensure they are not being overly utilized. All peers should have multiple opportunities to participate during specials, recess, lunch, and regular class time without the responsibility of being a STAR Buddy.

Optional Participation: Participation as a STAR Buddy should always be optional. Students should not be forced to be a STAR Buddy. A student must be allowed to end their involvement if they (or their parents) express this desire at any time during the program's implementation.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Survey Assessments

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the STAR Buddy program at your school, it is suggested that pre- and post- surveys be administered to participating teachers, parents, and students. The surveys seen on the next few pages and within Appendix B are suggested for use at the beginning and end of the school year. Each survey measures areas related to school and socialization of students with and without disabilities. The STAR Buddy Support Committee should collect information from these surveys and analyze them accordingly.

Teacher Survey: Provide this survey to the identified general education class teacher and separate class teacher (i.e., teacher of students with ASD)

Westwood Primary School

STAR Buddy Program Teacher Survey

Instructions: This year, your students will participate in a peer support program. We would like to gather data before and after their participation in order to measure the program's effectiveness. In this survey, you will be asked to reflect about your students regarding school and friendships. If you have any questions, please contact Suzy Martin (XXX-XXX-XXXX).]

Your Name:	Grade Level:	Gen Ed or Separate Class:
School:	School District:	Date:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Inclusive education at my school has been a positive experience for students with autism primarily served in separate class settings.				
2. Inclusive education at my school has been a positive experience for students without disabilities.				
3. I have been adequately prepared and provided with enough training, experiences and supports in order to include students with and without disabilities in my classroom.				
4. Students with autism from separate class settings monopolize teachers' time in the general education classroom.				
5. Students with autism from separate class settings included in the general education classroom, require additional time and attention which can be a disadvantage to students without disabilities.				
6. My students have friends with and without disabilities at school.				

Comments:

Parent of a Student with ASD Survey: Provide this survey to the parents of the students with ASD that will be receiving a STAR Buddy

Westwood Primary School

STAR Buddy Program Parent of a Student with ASD Survey

Instructions: This year, your child will participate in a peer support program. We would like to gather data before and after their participation in order to measure the program's effectiveness. In this survey, you will be asked to reflect about your child regarding school and socialization. If you have any questions, please contact Suzy Martin (XXX-XXX-XXXX).

Parent Name:	Child's Name:	Date:
School:	School District:	Grade:

	Very true	Somewhat true	Not very true
1. My child has friends with and without disabilities at school.			
2. My child attends non-school activities with friends (for example parties, movies, sleepovers).			
3. My child likes going to school.			
4. My child participates in community activities with me or other family members (for example: local events, restaurants, faith-based activities)			
5. My child tells me about what is going on at school.			
6. My child is learning social and independence skills at school.			
7. I worry about my child being bullied at school.			
8. I feel supported by the teachers and staff at my child's school			

Comments:

Parent of Peer Survey: Provide this survey to the parents of the students in the identified general education class despite whether they are chosen to be a STAR Buddy.

Westwood Primary School

STAR Buddy Program Parent of Peer Survey

Instructions: This year, your child's class will participate in a peer support program. We would like to gather data before and after their participation in order to measure the program's effectiveness. In this survey, you will be asked to reflect about your child regarding school and friendships. If you have any questions, please contact Suzy Martin (XXX-XXX-XXXX).

Parent Name:	Child's Name:	Date:
School:	School District:	Grade:

	Very true	Somewhat true	Not very true
1. My child has friends with and without disabilities at school, including friends with autism.			
2. My child attends non-school activities with friends with autism (parties, movies, sleepovers).			
3. My child likes going to school.			
4. My child tells me about what is going on at school.			
5. My child shows skills like responsibility, problem solving, patience, and flexibility.			
6. My child has a sense of belonging in his/her school community.			
7. My child is sensitive to the needs of others inside and outside of the school environment.			

Comments:

Student Survey: Provide this survey to the students in the identified general education class despite whether they are chosen to be a STAR Buddy. Teachers may wish to individually assess students and verbally read each question aloud.



**STAR Buddy Program
Peer Survey**

Name:	Teacher:
School:	School District:
Date:	Grade:

Directions: Answer each question as best as you can.

1. Do you like to make new friends?	Yes	No
2. Do you have friends outside of school such as at church, in your neighborhood, on a sports team?	Yes	No
3. Do you like coming to school?	Yes	No
4. Do you feel safe around your friends at school?	Yes	No

5. How can you be a good friend to others who are different than you?



PEER EDUCATION

Lesson Plans for Teaching about the STAR Buddy Program

The following 6 lesson plans were designed to be implemented in the identified general education classroom to all general education students. The intent of this instruction is to increase the understanding and familiarity of the students with ASD to their peers. It is important to note that it may not be appropriate to deliver instruction using these lessons to the class when the students with ASD from the separate class are present.

It is suggested that in addition to direct instruction using these lessons, the general education teacher and separate class special education teacher identify opportunities for their students to be in the same setting. For example, the separate class students may join the identified general education class during recess in order for the general education students to meet and interact with the students with ASD. This will help the general education students generalize the information they acquire from the lessons.

Lesson 1: Learning about My New Friends

Teacher Background Information-

The purpose of this lesson is to help students find commonalities between themselves and students in (separate class teacher)'s class. Students will gain a better understanding as to why students with ASD may act differently.

In this lesson, students will learn about their peers from (separate class teacher)'s class. You will teach them how brains work differently to make everyone unique. As you show the students a picture of each student from (separate class teacher)'s class, allow the students to share things they have in common with each new friend.

Prior to instruction, artifacts should be collected from the parent(s) of each student with ASD from (separate class teacher)'s class. The parents should create a brochure, PowerPoint, video, poster, or other item that can be used to introduce their child to the students in the general education class. The parent(s) may want the artifact to describe their child's special interests, how they communicate with others, likes and dislikes, etc. If the parent is unable/unwilling to create this artifact, the separate class teacher may wish to provide something.

It is important to note that you should stress the understanding of characteristics of someone who has autism. However, it is not necessary or advised to use the word autism to identify students from (separate class teacher)'s class.

Objectives-

1. The students will be able to identify characteristics of someone who has autism.
2. The students will be able to identify commonalities between themselves and students from (separate class teacher)'s class.

Needed Materials-

- Overhead/digital projector
- (Separate class teacher)'s class picture
- Artifact about student(s) from (separate class teacher)'s class- prior to instruction of this lesson, ask parents from (separate class teacher)'s class to create brochures, PowerPoints, videos, and/or posters about their child to share with your class

Introduction-

Begin the lesson by showing a picture of (separate class teacher)'s class on an overhead projector. Ask the students if they have ever seen the kids in the picture within the school.

Explain to the students that the students in the picture are part of (separate class teacher)'s class. Identify each student in the picture by name. Tell the students that this year, your class will have the opportunity to work with these students and today they will learn more about each of them.

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling-

Provide general instruction by describing differences and how brains work. Utilize the following discussion points:

- It's okay to be curious about people different than you. We are all made differently. No one is the same. Isn't that neat?
- Some of (separate class teacher)'s students' brains work differently than yours. Your brain is like the boss of your body. It's what makes you *you*! The brain has an important job: it helps you make sense of the world around you.
- Your brain lets you understand everything you see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. The brains of (separate class teacher)'s students work differently and that can make it hard to talk, listen, understand, play, and learn in the same way that others do. Many of (separate class teacher)'s students are good at remembering videos, drawing, running, and many other things.
- Everyone in (separate class teacher)'s classroom is different, the same way that everyone in our class is different. Some children do things differently than others.
- People have other ways besides talking to tell us what they know and want. When you see your friend hand flapping, rocking, or repeating noises, they may be trying to tell you something, or trying to calm down.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling-

Explain to the students you will be sharing things about the students in the picture of (separate class teacher)'s class in order to get to know them better. Ask your students to begin thinking about what they may have in common with the students from (separate class teacher)'s class as you share. Show the artifact of each student from the separate class and share about them. Stop at appropriate times to ask students if they have something in common with each student. For example, if the artifact states that a student loves to play with cars, ask the students, "How many of you also like to play with cars?" After the students respond, draw attention to how that is an interest they have in common.

Closure-

Ask students to turn and talk to a partner about something they learned about a student from (separate class teacher)'s class. Then ask 3-4 students to share aloud. Inform students that they will be seeing more of (separate class teacher)'s class as the two classrooms will be buddy rooms this year. Encourage them to engage with the students from (separate class teacher)'s class whenever possible. Make a short list of ways to engage (e.g., wave, say hi, smile, etc.).

Lesson 2: How We are Similar and Different from One Another

Teacher Background Information-

The purpose of this lesson is to help your students learn more about their peers by finding similarities and differences. The activities will focus on exploring interests to find similarities and differences amongst all peers.

In this lesson students will be exploring similarities and differences. They'll begin by simply comparing an apple and a strawberry. They will then use a worksheet to help them describe themselves. Next, you will lead a class discussion about the interests the students listed on their worksheets. It is important to help the students find similarities in their interests and what they learned about the students from (separate class teacher)'s class in Lesson 1. Next, the students will get to explore for more similarities and differences of classmates in a fun game of Simon Says and close the lesson by sharing things they learned about their classmates during the game.

Objectives-

1. The students will be able to explore similarities and differences of children.
2. The students will be able to explore what it means to be unique.

Needed Materials-

- All About Me worksheet (See Appendix C)
- Picture of a strawberry and an apple
- Marker board/large chart paper
- Markers

Introduction-

Show a picture of an apple and a strawberry to the students. Ask them to think about how the two items are similar and how they are different. Make a T-chart on the board or large chart paper and write students' responses. Inform the students that today, they will be thinking about how people are similar and different just like how they thought about the apple and the strawberry.

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling-

Have students complete the All About Me worksheet to identify things that are true about themselves. After students have completed the worksheet, have a discussion about how we are similar and different from one another. Ask questions to students and encourage them to

use a gesture to indicate that they have the same answer that was shared aloud. For example, if the question asked was “What is your favorite animal?” and a student answered aloud “A dog,” all students who also consider a dog as their favorite animal could put a thumbs-up to indicate silently they have that in common with the student who responded aloud. Utilize the following questions to guide the discussion past basic interests/characteristics:

- Do you ever get mad or frustrated? What do you do when you are mad or frustrated?
- Are there any noises or foods that bother you?
- What things do you think you may have in common with the students from (separate class teacher)’s class?
- How would you feel if you did not have any friends?

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling-

Play Simon Says emphasizing ways in which students may be similar or different. For example, say, “Everyone who likes hockey, stand on one foot” or “Everyone who has a pet cat, put your left hand on your head.” Encourage the students to remember things that they have in common or that are different than their peers because they will be asked to share at the end of the game.

Closure-

Have students sit in a circle. Ask each student to name one way in which they and another peer are similar. Have the students share something they did not already know about each other before the Simon Says game. Consider providing visual sentence starter frames (e.g., I am similar to _____ in that we both _____., I learned _____.)for students to support their responses.

Teacher Background Information-

The purpose of this lesson is to help students to appreciate differences. Unique actions or characteristics are often used as reasons to shun or bully a peer. By educating the students on the value of differences they develop an understanding and appreciation for all peers.

In this lesson students will watch a video that shows ways in which students might act differently. After the video you will lead into a class discussion about what makes everyone unique. Students will make paper snowflakes to represent the beauty of differences and compare thumbprints to see just how unique each person really is.

Remember to include things you taught about (separate class teacher)'s students in discussions so that students are making the connection of the lesson to their new friends.

Objectives-

1. The students will be able to recognize ways each friend is special and unique.

Needed Materials-

- Internet access
- Overhead/digital projector
- We're Amazing 1, 2, 3! Coloring page (see Appendix C)
- Crayons/markers
- Large chart paper
- White paper (1 per student)
- Scissors
- Non-toxic inkpads

Introduction-

Ask the students if they watch or have watched Sesame Street. Say, "There's a new friend on the show. Her name is Julia, and she loves to play. Sometimes her way of playing is a little different. As you watch the video, see if you notice things about her that are a little different from her friends, and things that are the same. And remember: Everyone is different in some way. That's what makes the world so interesting."

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling-

Show the video *We're Amazing, 1,2,3!* from the Sesame Street website (<https://autism.sesamestreet.org/storybook/we-are-amazing/>). Ask the students what they

noticed (for example, that Julia repeats things, or that she covers her ears when its noisy). Ask them to name things they do differently from their friends. Perhaps some students eat pizza with their hands, others with a fork. Some fall asleep with a nightlight, some with music playing. Some walk around, others use wheelchairs.

Distribute the coloring page (see Appendix) and crayons or markers for students to color.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling-

Invite students to make a cut-paper snowflake. Emphasize just like people, no two snowflakes are the same- which is part of what makes them so beautiful. Hang them around the room or send them home with the students.

Set out nontoxic inkpads and a large piece of white butcher paper. Have students make a collage of fingerprints. Invite students to compare their own fingerprints to those of their peers emphasizing that just like people, no two fingerprints are the same.

Closure-

Have students share about what makes them unique and special.

Lesson 4: Showing Respect to Others

Teacher Background Information-

The purpose of this lesson is to help students to understand the importance of respect to others.

In this lesson students will watch two videos as they learn what it means to show respect. After a brief discussion, students will then listen to a read aloud. Students will identify the emotions that the characters in the book felt as they are show respect and disrespect.

Be sure to include discussion about ways to show respect to the students from (separate class teacher)'s class.

Objectives-

1. The students will be able to identify what respect means.

Needed Materials-

- Internet access
- Overhead/digital projector
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes
- Emotion cards (see Appendix C)
- Large chart paper
- Markers

Introduction-

Tell students that today they will be learning about what it means to respect others. Show the Sesame Street video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOzrAK4gOSo>).

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling-

Ask students how they like to be greeted every day when they enter class (e.g., say hello, handshake, high-five, hug, etc.). Ask students, "Why do we greet each other this way?" Encourage students to identify these gestures as nice and kind ways to greet one another. Introduce the word respect/respectful and disrespect/disrespectful. Say, "Showing respect means caring how a person feels. Showing respect means doing things that show another person you think they are important. Treating people with respect makes them, and you, feel good. You can show respect for other people, for yourself, and even for the world. There are lots of ways to show respect." Ask students if they can think of other ways that they show respect.

Show PIXAR short film *For the Birds* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPopaJsNWd4>). Ask the class, "What happened in the movie?" Ask students to turn and talk to a neighbor and identify if the birds are being respectful or disrespectful. Ask for examples from individual students. Ask students to turn and talk to a neighbor and share their explanation of respect.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling-

Read aloud the book *Chrysanthemum*, by Kevin Henkes. After Read Aloud, ask students, "What are some examples of disrespect from the story? What are some examples of respect in the story?" Include the following discussion questions:

- Would you want to be Chrysanthemum when her classmates called her names and made fun of how many letters were in her name? Why or why not?
- How did it make Chrysanthemum feel when the other girls were being disrespectful? Why?
- When Chrysanthemum's feelings were hurt, she was sad. When she was sad, how do you think she did on her schoolwork? Why?
- How did Chrysanthemum feel when the music teacher said she liked her name? Would you want to feel this way?
- How do other people show respect for you?
- How do you feel when other people show your respect?
- How do you feel when other people show you disrespect?

Explain the next activity by saying, "Chrysanthemum felt a lot of different emotions and feelings during this story. When characters in the story showed her respect, she felt differently than when characters in the story showed her disrespect. We are going to figure out what feelings she had when she felt respect, and what feelings she had when she felt disrespect." Call on a volunteer who is seated quietly and raising his or her hand to pull a card out of the bag. Bring attention to the observation that this student is being respectful. Ask the student what Chrysanthemum is feeling in the picture. Ask the class, "When do you think Chrysanthemum felt this emotion? When she was being respected or disrespected?" Place tape on the back of the emotion card and ask the student to stick the card in the appropriate column on the chart (Large chart paper with basic T-chart drawn, one column labeled "Respect" and the other labeled "Disrespect.") Repeat with all emotion cards.

Closure-

When all the emotion cards are displayed correctly on the T-chart, ask students to turn and talk to their partner to answer the following questions:

- What do you notice about how Chrysanthemum is feeling in the "Respected" column?

- What do you notice about how Chrysanthemum is feeling in the “Disrespected” column?
- Looking at the chart, which column would you want to be in? Why?

Lesson 5: Showing Compassion to Others

Teacher Background Information-

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students how to show compassion to their peers. The students will learn how their attitudes can show others that they care.

In this lesson students will learn what it means to show compassion. You will build a recipe with your students by discussing all of the attitudes that show compassion to others. You will build a T-chart by sorting phrases into categories and then read a book and discuss how compassion was shown in the story. Close by discussing ways to show compassion to the students in (separate class teacher)'s class.

Objectives-

1. Students will be able to identify what compassion means.
2. Students will be able to identify ways to show compassion to others.
3. Students will be able to identify phrases/statements that convey an attitude of compassion (kindness/caring) or attitude of selfishness and anger.

Needed Materials-

- Cooking tools (e.g., mixing bowl, large spoon, measuring cups etc.)
- Sticky notes
- Marker
- Large Chart Paper
- Attitude phrases (see Appendix C)
- Jar/Large Container
- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

Introduction-

Introduce the concept of compassion by asking students if they know what the word means. Explain to the class that kindness, compassion, understanding, and helping are ways to show we care. We practice compassion by showing that we care.

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling-

Tell students that you need their help to write a recipe for compassion so others will know how to make it. Using cooking tools such as a mixing bowl, large spoon, and measuring cups, have students help you create "compassion". Have each ingredient (e.g., heart, kindness, hope, etc.) written on a sticky note/paper to add into the bowl using the cooking tools. On a

large chart paper, write the recipe (using pictures to aid understanding) and have the students act out the “cooking” using props. (Example: Start with a big heart. Add one cup of kindness. Mix in caring and understanding. Stir in a large scoop of sharing and a sprinkle of hope. Top with compliments.)

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling-

Tell students that sometimes just the words they choose can make a difference in showing compassion. Have students draw pre-written Attitude Phrases (see Appendix C) from a jar and read each one aloud. Ask the students to decide if the sentence conveys an attitude of compassion or an attitude of selfishness and anger. Glue the sentences to a T-chart with appropriate headings.

Read *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein aloud to the students. After reading the story, have students reflect and answer the following questions:

- Why did the tree keep giving things to the boy?
- What did the boy give the tree in return?
- Did the boy really care about the tree?
- What can you do to show you care for others?

Closure-

Ask the students to turn and talk about how they plan to show compassion to the students in (separate class teacher’s) class. Call on students to share their partner’s idea.

Teacher Background Information-

The purpose of this lesson is to educate students on the purpose and role of a STAR Buddy. Students often learn best from students so a STAR Buddy can provide a peer to rely on as an example or assistance.

In this lesson students will learn what the letters in STAR represent. Students will learn ways to help their peers by following the acronym Stay, Talk, Assist, Reward. Students will decorate a star to help them remember what they have learned.

Objectives-

1. The students will be able to identify what STAR means.
2. The students will be able to identify ways to be a STAR Buddy.

Needed Materials-

- Star cut-out
- Crayons/markers
- Stickers and other décor
- Poster with acronym (STAR- stay, talk, assist, reward)

Introduction-

Say, “This year, some of you will have the opportunity to be a special buddy to our friends in (separate class teacher)’s class. Today we will learn about how to be a STAR Buddy. A STAR Buddy isn’t like a real star you see in the sky at night.” Write the word *star* on the board vertically. Say, “How do you spell the word star?” Allow students to say each letter to spell the word *star* together. “Each letter in the word star tells you more about how to be a STAR Buddy. Let’s talk about each letter.”

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling-

Discuss each letter and the word that corresponds to it. Inform students how they can do each action item to support students in (separate class teacher)’s class.

- **Stay:** stay nearby or close to our friends. If you notice that you are standing alone during free time, move close to your classmates and friends. If you notice that one of your classmates is standing alone, invite your friend to join the group or play in a game.
- **Talk:** when you are near your friends, talk to them. Many do not know the correct words to say to you, or know how to have a good conversation. Attempt conversations with

them, ask them how they are doing or what they are playing. Try to talk while you are participating in an activity.

- **Assist:** help your STAR Buddy or others if they need help. If you notice a friend or classmate standing off by themselves, include them by inviting them to participate in what you're doing. Help your friend play along with you. Prompt them to take turns, to push them on the swing, or teach them the rules of a game you are playing. You can also be a friend at your desk in class by helping them find the right page number in your textbook, showing them which problems you are working on, helping them to pick up papers they drop, or helping them sound out words while reading, if the teacher lets you.
- **Reward:** when you see your STAR Buddy, or even see someone else do a good job, tell them! You can give a high five, a knuckle-bump, a pat on the back, or just say "Good job!" or "Thank you!". Smile at them; let them know that you enjoy playing or working with them. Let your friends know that you noticed them doing the right thing. You can even say "I liked spending time with you today."

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling-

Provide a star cut-out for each student to write the acronym (Stay, Talk, Assist, Reward) on and decorate. Ask students if they have questions about what it means to be a STAR Buddy to the students in (separate class teacher)'s class. Continue discussion by utilizing the following statements:

- Take the initiative to include your buddy- Your friend may desperately want to be included and may not know how to ask.
- Find out what your buddy likes and doesn't like so you know what activities to play together or what to talk about.
- Be persistent and patient. Remember that your friend may take more time to respond than other people. It doesn't necessarily mean he or she isn't interested.
- Communicate clearly. Speak at a reasonable speed and volume. It might be helpful to use short sentences or single words. Use gestures, pictures, and facial expressions to help communicate.
- Stand up for him or her. If you see someone teasing or bullying your buddy, take a stand and tell the person that it's not cool.
- Don't be afraid. Your friend is just a kid like you who needs a little help. Accept his or her differences and respect his or her strengths just as you would for any friend.

Provide several role-playing/practice opportunities for students to identify how they may respond in certain situations with their friend with ASD. For example, you or another staff

can be a student with ASD and prompt the students to act out how they may talk to you or invite you to participate in a game.

Closure-

Show a poster with the acronym on it. Ask students for scenarios of how to Stay, Talk, Assist, or Reward, or just how to be a good friend. Then explain to them that you want them to all be good STAR Buddies this school year to everyone, but some may have the opportunity to work more frequently with students from (separate class teacher)'s class. Send parent permission forms home with students.

TEACHING STUDENTS WITH ASD

Introducing the STAR Buddy Program to Students with ASD

The separate class special education teacher should introduce the STAR Buddy program to the students with ASD that will be participating. The teacher may want to modify portions of the lessons within the previous section for instruction of students with ASD on the STAR Buddy program. However, this instruction should be individualized to meet the students' varying learning styles and include additional evidence-based supports (e.g., video modeling, visuals, social narratives, etc.). For example, if the student with ASD utilizes a visual schedule to aid in transition from one activity/setting to the next, the teacher should create and introduce an icon/picture for the schedule that indicates when the student would be expected to engage with the STAR Buddy or join the STAR Buddy in a general education setting. For additional guidance and support on evidence-based strategies to teach these behaviors/skills, consider utilizing the Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM) (<https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules>) created by The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The following social narrative provides an example of another type of resource to utilize when introducing the STAR Buddy program to a student with ASD:

My New Friends



I have new friends from Ms. Smith's classroom. Their names are Johnny and Karla. They are very nice and



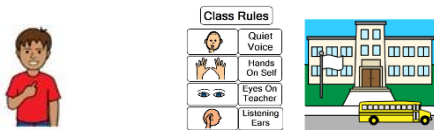
want to spend time with me.



I will see Johnny and Karla when I am with Ms. Smith's class at recess, lunch, PE, and music.



Johnny and Karla will stay near me, talk to me, and help me when I need help. Johnny and Karla will remind



me to follow my rules at school.



I will stay with Johnny and Karla. I will talk to Johnny and Karla. I will let Johnny and Karla help me when I



need help. I will listen to Johnny and Karla when they remind me of my rules.




Johnny and Karla will be happy when I spend time with them. I will be happy to have new friends.

STAR BUDDY SELECTION

Guidelines for Selecting Peers to Become STAR Buddies

Once parent permission forms are collected, the STAR Buddy Support Committee should select 2-3 students to become STAR Buddies for each student with ASD who will participate in the program. Special consideration to STAR Buddy selection should include peers who:



Have good social skills, language, and age appropriate play skills



Have positive interactions with the student with ASD



Are compliant with adult directives



Have consistent attendance



Express willingness to participate



Have similar interests to the student with ASD

INDIVIDUALIZED PEER TRAINING

Strategies and Techniques for Successful Peer Interactions

Once students have been selected to work as STAR Buddies, they should receive additional formalized training. The purpose of this training includes teaching students strategies and techniques for interacting with their friends. Training should be spaced apart across several days in order to ensure STAR Buddies acquire the necessary skills. It is suggested that the training include instruction, modeling, and role-playing of each skill. During the first few weeks of program activation, STAR Buddies should receive feedback on their application and generalization of the skills. The following strategies and techniques should be covered during the training:

Staying Near My Friend

Teach STAR Buddies to stay in close proximity to their friend. For example, when outside at recess, the STAR Buddy should try to stay within 5 to 10 feet of their friend. During assemblies, the STAR Buddy should sit next to their friend.

Use My Words and Gestures Before Touching

Teach STAR Buddies to use prompting hierarchies. For example, when they want to prompt their friend to sit down, they should first tell them to sit down, model how to sit down, tap the chair to gesture to sit down, and then physically help their friend to sit down. Rather than holding their friend's hand walking down the hall, the STAR Buddy should gesture their friend to follow them.

Talk and Listen to My Friend

Teach STAR Buddies to talk to their friend often. For example, when playing with blocks, the STAR Buddy can talk about how many blocks they are stacking, identify the colors of blocks, and ask their friend what they would like to build. Equally important is teaching the STAR Buddy to listen to their friend. Teach STAR Buddies to praise their friends for using their words or assistive technology device to communicate what they want.

Show My Friend How to Act and What to Do

Teach STAR Buddies how to model appropriate actions and behaviors. STAR Buddies should be exemplar models of appropriate behavior in all settings/situations. STAR Buddies should also model how to complete activities and model appropriate play skills for their friend.

Ask for Help When I Don't Know What To Do

Teach STAR Buddies how to ask adults for help or guidance if they are uncertain what to do in any situation. STAR Buddies should also be taught to tell an adult about any emergency, concern, or behavior instance that may occur when interacting with their friend.

My Job is to Praise Not Punish

Teach STAR Buddies how to use behavior specific praise. For example, when their friend follows directions and sits down they could say, "Johnny, great job sitting down" and pair this with a high five and a big smile. STAR Buddies should not tell their friend to "stop" or "no" when they do something inappropriate. Rather, they should use their prompting hierarchies to encourage appropriate behavior.

Sometimes It May Take My Friend a Long Time

Teach STAR Buddies that their friend may need a longer time to respond/react given a question/directive. It is best to wait 5 to 7 seconds before they ask/tell them something a second time. For example, if they want to prompt their friend to sit down, they should tell them to sit down and wait 5 seconds before modeling how to sit down. Then they should wait a period of time again before gesturing to their friend to sit down.

Helping My Friend

Teach STAR Buddies to be a helper to their friend in time of need. For example, if their friend needs help carrying their lunch tray or picking up some blocks the STAR Buddy should assist. Teach STAR Buddies that helping doesn't mean doing everything for their friend. They should allow their friend to do portions of the task with them.

Follow Along with What My Friend Wants to Do

Teach STAR Buddies to engage in activities that their friend wants to do rather than forcing them to do something else. For example, at recess, if their friend wants to play in the sand, the STAR Buddy should join in that activity rather than forcing the friend to play tag. However, STAR Buddies should be encouraged to prompt their friend to try/explore new activities.

Using Pictures to Help My Friend Understand

Teach STAR Buddies about the visual supports that are used by their friend. If the student with ASD utilizes a picture schedule, the STAR Buddy should be taught to prompt his/her friend to manipulate the pictures in appropriate ways. If visual pictures for prompting directives (e.g., sit, eat, wait) are used for the student with ASD, STAR Buddies should also be taught how to pair their prompting hierarchies to include this support.

Given students with ASD have varied social communication abilities, behaviors, and interests, training on the strategies and techniques should be as individualized as possible. Each STAR Buddy should be informed of the varied characteristics of their friend, similarities and common interests, and taught how to modify strategies and techniques accordingly. For example, if a student with ASD uses an assistive technology device to communicate his wants/needs, his STAR Buddy should be taught how this system works. If this student also doesn't like to be physically touched, the STAR Buddy should be instructed to keep an appropriate physical distance from him.

COACHING/MENTORING

A Protocol for Meeting with STAR Buddies

Every other week, a member of the STAR Buddy Support Committee should have a one-on-one meeting with STAR Buddies to check-in and monitor the program. The following protocol should be used for these meetings and the STAR Buddy Support Committee member should record comments from the discussion held with the STAR Buddy for documentation purposes. See Appendix D for the protocol form to record comments. The four sections of the meeting should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

1. **Praise the STAR Buddy on 2 separate actions (2 minutes).** Information should be gathered from teachers and staff in order to formulate this praise. It should be tied to the strategies and techniques taught during STAR Buddy training and behavior specific. For example, “Suzy, you did a great job staying close to Mary when you were at recess this week. A good STAR Buddy stays near their friend as much as possible” or “Suzy, I really like how you help Mary through the lunch line each day by carrying her milk but letting her carry the tray. A good STAR Buddy helps their friends.”
2. **Inquire about 2 things the STAR Buddy enjoyed (2 minutes).** Simply ask the STAR Buddy what they liked best about working with their friend during the last two weeks. If they are unable to respond, prompt them to recall a special activity/game/project that they did together or when their friend did something new.
3. **Ask the STAR Buddy if they have any questions or concerns about continuing to work with their friend (4 minutes).** Answer/respond to these questions and concerns, frequently referring to the strategies and techniques taught in the STAR Buddy training. If the student doesn’t express any questions or concerns consider utilizing questions to prompt the students (e.g., “I noticed that when you were trying to help Mary play tag with everyone, Mary had a hard time playing. What do you want to try next time you want to help Mary play tag?”).
4. **Challenge the STAR Buddy with something new (2 minutes).** Based on information gathered from teachers and staff prior to the meeting, give the STAR Buddy a challenge for the next two weeks. For example, if the STAR Buddy held their friend’s hand and led them everywhere rather than provide opportunities for the friend to be independent,

the challenge may be to use more gestures and words to encourage the friend to come with them.

SUPPORT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A Protocol for Support Committee Meetings

It is suggested that once the STAR Buddy program is implemented that the STAR Buddy Support Committee meet once a month to monitor progress and address any need for change. The Program Director should structure the meeting to review the documentation collected from STAR Buddy Coaching/Mentoring sessions as well as to address concerns of participating teachers. The Program Director should provide an agenda to committee members prior to the meeting. (An example agenda is provided in Appendix E to review.) The following protocol is suggested during meetings to maintain the integrity of the meetings' purpose while valuing the voices of the committee members.

1. **Review/Discuss Documentation from Coaching/Mentoring Sessions** (10-15 minutes)- It is suggested that the team divide the documentation collected from the STAR Buddy coaching/mentoring sessions in order to review the information and identify any concerns that should be brought to the group. The committee should discuss these concerns and identify a plan to address them as needed.
 - a. **Discuss Need for Alternative STAR Buddies**- If for any reason a STAR Buddy needs to be removed from participating in the program, the committee should utilize this time to identify a replacement. A plan for how this new STAR Buddy will receive individualized training should be discussed also.
2. **Discuss/Address Teacher Concerns** (5-10 minutes per teacher)- General education teachers (including teachers of special classes), separate class teachers, and paraprofessionals should be allowed time to voice concerns regarding the program and the committee should discuss and identify a plan to address them as needed. It is suggested that these staff notify the Program Director prior to the meeting about the need to address concerns during the meeting to identify the total duration of this item.
3. **Identify Coach/Mentor** (2-5 minutes)- The committee should identify which members will be responsible for conducting the coaching/mentoring sessions of STAR Buddies for the next month.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Parent Permission Form

[insert date]

Dear _____,

Our school is currently working to improve social programming for students in our special education classrooms and their peers. As part of this program, we are asking your permission for your child to participate.

Several of our students with disabilities are educated primarily in special education classrooms and have limited interactions with their general education classroom peers. The program, called the STAR Buddy program, is a peer training program to increase the interactions between students with disabilities and their peers. Students will be trained to talk and play with children with disabilities during playground or other activities. STAR stands for Stay, Talk, Assist, Reward. Teachers from the school will do this training, and your child may be asked to wear a button or sticker when they are the STAR student. No academic time will be affected and adults will always be supervising playground and other activities.

The program is expected to increase the number of chances a child with a disability has to play with non-disabled classmates, and hopefully make friends. Risks to your child are expected to be minimal and not exceed what is expected during any routine school activities.

Your child's participation in this program is voluntary and your child will not be penalized or lose any benefits that he/she are now entitled to do if you do decide not to have your child participate. You may also have your child stop participating at any time by notifying the school. Your child can also tell us if they want to stop participation in the program at any time as well, even if you give your permission.

No materials are needed for this program, beyond the STAR button or sticker, which will be provided by your child's teacher. You may ask to see the button or sticker ahead of time or ask to see more information about the STAR Buddy program.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact _____ (phone number).

Sincerely,

School Representative

I give permission for _____ County Schools and _____ (school name) to complete the STAR Buddy training, and to be involved with the social programming of my child, _____.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

STAR Buddy Program Teacher Survey

Instructions: This year, your students will participate in a peer support program. We would like to gather data before and after their participation in order to measure the program’s effectiveness. In this survey, you will be asked to reflect about your students regarding school and friendships. If you have any questions, please contact: _____.

Your Name:	Grade Level:	Gen Ed or Separate Class:
School:	School District:	Date:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Inclusive education at my school has been a positive experience for students with autism primarily served in separate class settings.				
2. Inclusive education at my school has been a positive experience for students without disabilities.				
3. I have been adequately prepared and provided with enough training, experiences and supports in order to include students with and without disabilities in my classroom.				
4. Students with autism from separate class settings monopolize teachers’ time in the general education classroom.				
5. Students with autism from separate class settings included in the general education classroom, require additional time and attention which can be a disadvantage to students without disabilities.				
6. My students have friends with and without disabilities at school.				

Comments:

STAR Buddy Program Parent of a Student with ASD Survey

Instructions: This year, your child will participate in a peer support program. We would like to gather data before and after their participation in order to measure the program’s effectiveness. In this survey, you will be asked to reflect about your child regarding school and socialization. If you have any questions, please contact _____.

Parent Name:	Child’s Name:	Date:
School:	School District:	Grade:

Comments:

	Very true	Somewhat true	Not very true
1. My child has friends with and without disabilities at school.			
2. My child attends non-school activities with friends (for example parties, movies, sleepovers).			
3. My child likes going to school.			
4. My child participates in community activities with me or other family members (for example: local events, restaurants, faith-based activities)			
5. My child tells me about what is going on at school.			
6. My child is learning social and independence skills at school.			
7. I worry about my child being bullied at school.			
8. I feel supported by the teachers and staff at my child’s school			

Comments:

STAR Buddy Program Parent of Peer Survey

Instructions: This year, your child’s class will participate in a peer support program. We would like to gather data before and after their participation in order to measure the program’s effectiveness. In this survey, you will be asked to reflect about your child regarding school and friendships. If you have any questions, please contact: _____.

Parent Name:	Child’s Name:	Date:
School:	School District:	Grade:

	Very true	Somewhat true	Not very true
1. My child has friends with and without disabilities at school, including friends with autism.			
2. My child attends non-school activities with friends with autism (parties, movies, sleepovers).			
3. My child likes going to school.			
4. My child tells me about what is going on at school.			
5. My child shows skills like responsibility, problem solving, patience, and flexibility.			
6. My child has a sense of belonging in his/her school community.			
7. My child is sensitive to the needs of others inside and outside of the school environment.			

Comments:

**STAR Buddy Program
Peer Survey**

Name:

Teacher:

School:

School District:

Date:

Grade:

Directions: Answer each question as best as you can.



















1. Do you like to make new friends?	Yes	No
2. Do you have friends outside of school such as at church, in your neighborhood, on a sports team?	Yes	No
3. Do you like coming to school?	Yes	No
4. Do you feel safe around your friends at school?	Yes	No

5. How can you be a good friend to others who are different than you?

All About Me

Name: _____

Directions: Circle the sentences that are true about you.

<p>I like to watch TV.</p> 	<p>I have a brother.</p> 
<p>I have a sister.</p> 	<p>I love to eat spaghetti.</p> 
<p>I have a pet.</p> 	<p>I have brown hair.</p> 
<p>I like to play on the iPad.</p> 	<p>I wear glasses.</p> 
<p>I like winter.</p> 	<p>I like to play outside.</p> 
<p>I like carrots.</p> 	<p>I have red hair.</p> 
<p>I like loud noises.</p> 	<p>I like to dance to music.</p> 
<p>I like to be touched.</p> 	<p>I like to play with toys.</p> 
<p>I like to be alone sometimes.</p> 	<p>I like milk.</p> 

Directions: Draw or write about two more things about you.

<div style="height: 47px;"></div>	<div style="height: 47px;"></div>
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------



Sesame Street and Autism see amazing in all children

For more, visit sesamestreet.org/autism
#SeeAmazing



TM and © 2017 Sesame Workshop.

MAJOR SUPPORT PROVIDED BY



AMERICAN GREETINGS

GENEROUS SUPPORT PROVIDED BY

ROBERT R.
MCCORMICK
FOUNDATION

KRISTEN ROHR

Emotion Cards



Attitude Phrases

Would you be so kind?

This will teach you.

How dare you!

I'm sure you can do it.

How can I ever thank you?

It's the least I can do.

No hurry.

Too bad for you.

It was a pleasure.

It's a wonder you didn't break it!

It was no big thing to help you.

You got what you deserved.

It's about time.

You can sit by me and hang out.

Something bothering you today?

Whatever!

STAR Buddy Program Coaching Protocol

STAR Buddy:	Friend:	Date:
-------------	---------	-------

Praise the STAR Buddy on 2 separate actions (2 minutes). *Record praise statements:*

1. _____

2. _____

Inquire about 2 things the STAR Buddy enjoyed (2 minutes). *Record responses:*

1. _____

2. _____

Ask the STAR Buddy if they have any questions or concerns about continuing to work with their friend (4 minutes). *Record questions:*

Challenge the STAR Buddy with something new (2 minutes). *Record challenge:*



Westwood Primary School

STAR Buddy Program Committee Meeting

November 25, 2020

Committee Members:

Suzy Miller
Zach Parrott
Kim Troup

John Peters
Deidre Cagle

Daniel Gonzalez
Karla Phillips

Meryl Chumley
Karena Ellis

Agenda:

1. Review Notes from Previous Month's Meeting and Discuss Updates if Needed (5 minutes)
2. Review and Discuss Coaching/Mentoring Session Documentation (10 minutes)
 - a. Discuss Need of Alternative STAR Buddies
3. Discuss and Address Teacher Concerns (30 minutes)
 - a. Daniel Gonzalez- Music
 - b. Karena Ellis- General Education (Kindergarten)
 - c. Kim Troup- Paraprofessional
4. Identify Coach/Mentor(s) for December (5 minutes)
5. Set Meeting Date/Time for December Meeting (5 minutes)

REFERENCES

- Boyd, C. M., Fraiman, J. L., Hawkins, K. A., Labin, J. M., Sutter, M. B., & Wahl, M. R. (2008). Effects of the STAR intervention program on interactions between campers with and without disabilities during inclusive summer day camp activities. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 43*(1), 92-101.
- Brock, M.E., Dueker, S. A., & Barczak, M. A. (2017). Brief report: Improving social outcomes for students with autism at recess through peer-mediated pivotal response training. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 48*(6), 2224-2230.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3435-3>
- English, K., Goldstein, H., Shafer, K., & Kaczmarek, L. (1997). Promoting interactions among preschoolers with and without disabilities: Effects of a buddy skills-training program. *Exceptional Children, 63*(2), 229-243.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004)
- Odom, S. L., & Strain, P. S. (1986). A comparison of peer-initiation and teacher-antecedent interventions for promoting reciprocal social interactions of autistic preschoolers. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 19*, 58-72.
- Schoger, K. D. (2006). Reverse inclusion: Providing peer social interaction opportunities to students placed in self-contained special education classrooms. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus 2*(6), Article 3.
- Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Szendrey, S., McIntyre, N. S., Yucesoy-Ozkan, S., & Savage, M. N. (2020). Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with Autism. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team.