



Peer Assistance for Students with Disabilities I and II

PEIMS Code: N1290203, N1290204

Abbreviation: PASWD1, PASWD2

Grade Level(s): 9-12

Award of Credit: 0.5 per course

Approved Innovative Course

- Districts must have local board approval to implement innovative courses.
- In accordance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.27, school districts must provide instruction in all essential knowledge and skills identified in this innovative course.
- Innovative courses may only satisfy elective credit toward graduation requirements.
- Please refer to [TAC §74.13](#) for guidance on endorsements.

Course Description:

Peer Assistance for Students with Disabilities I is designed to promote an inclusive educational environment for students receiving special education services. This course provides peer assistants the opportunity to understand the different disabilities of the students, develop leadership skills to aid the learners and work on communication skills between the peer assistant and the learners. Peer assistants obtain initial training in confidentiality, cueing, prompting, and positive reinforcement to be used with their students. Peer assistants aid the teacher inside the special education setting by modeling appropriate learning behaviors, assisting with hands on learning activities, and developing activities to facilitate inclusion within the classroom. The goal is to create a relationship among age-appropriate peers of different abilities, both socially and academically, that will last long beyond the classroom time.

Peer Assistance for Students with Disabilities II differs from *Peer Assistance for Students with Disabilities I* in that the peer assistant provides more one-on-one instruction to the student receiving assistance. The peer assistant role is designed to accompany the student receiving assistance as a facilitator of learning as the peer assistant goes out to courses within the school. The relationship that develops inside the classroom between these peer assistants and learners with special needs allows for growth for each student as the peer assistants act as a support and voice in the classroom and the student receiving assistance learns lifelong skills and develops confidence within and outside of the school environment.

Essential Knowledge and Skills:

Peer Assistance for Students with Disabilities I

- (a) General requirements. Students shall be awarded one-half credit for the successful completion of the course.
- (b) Introduction.

- (1) In this course, the peer assistant understands of the impact of relationships with self and others as well as the impact of a student's disability on relationships with age-appropriate peers.
 - (2) The peer assistant acquires a basic understanding of various disabilities, including the implications a disability may have on learning, communication, and independence.
 - (3) The peer assistant acquires a basic understanding of the importance of maintaining confidentiality for students with disabilities per federal law and complies with federal law.
 - (4) The peer assistant gains a fundamental understanding of appropriate techniques, routines, and procedures to support their peers' learning in the classroom.
- (c) Knowledge and Skills.
- (1) Peer assistant skills. The peer assistant understands the importance of developing a supportive and trusting relationship with a student receiving special education services. The peer assistant facilitates inclusion in the classroom both academically and socially. The student is expected to:
 - (A) participate in class as a leader and a peer;
 - (B) observe how activities and communication may need to be adapted to meet the needs of the student receiving assistance;
 - (C) support the student receiving assistance in social, peer-group settings such as including the students in conversations by asking questions or verbalizing nonverbal communication;
 - (D) provide positive reinforcement and supportive language in interactions with peers;
 - (E) assist the student receiving assistance with identified goals;
 - (F) participate in a variety of activities that provide the student receiving assistance with opportunities to practice social skills;
 - (G) model and reinforce appropriate behaviors; and
 - (H) persuade the student receiving assistance to engage in assignments.
 - (2) Management and communication. The peer assistant identifies and uses techniques for managing learning and behavioral outcomes with assistance from and in consultation with the classroom teacher. The student is expected to:
 - (A) define and implement redirecting and focusing techniques;
 - (B) recognize repetitive and self-stimulating behaviors, when they occur, and redirect the student receiving assistance back to the task at hand;
 - (C) identify common distractions for students and use positive reinforcers for redirecting attention of the student receiving assistance;
 - (D) identify and describe communication methods that the student receiving assistance can use to express wants and needs such as pointing, gesturing, and using a picture exchange communication system or an electronic device;

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- (E) identify and describe different types of cueing such as verbal indirect cues, verbal direct cues, pointing, and physical gestures; and
 - (F) identify and describe different types of prompting such as verbal directions, gesture assist, visual graphics, student modeling, and physical assistance.
- (3) Confidentiality. The peer assistant understands students' rights of confidentiality per federal law (Public Law 94-142) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The student is expected to:
- (A) define confidentiality and how it is addressed in IDEA, IDEIA, and FERPA;
 - (B) discuss confidentiality and how to the peer assistant/student relationship; and
 - (C) maintain confidentiality as it applies to students receiving special education services in varied settings and scenarios.
- (4) Learning styles. The peer student identifies personal learning style and the learning styles of students receiving assistance. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify and discuss different learning styles;
 - (B) identify personal learning styles using an intelligence model survey; and
 - (C) assess learning styles of students with disabilities within the classroom setting.
- (5) Support services. The peer assistant describes various disabilities and the services needed to support students with disabilities in an educational setting. The student is expected to:
- (A) analyze the need for and importance of support services provided to students with disabilities in an educational setting;
 - (B) identify types of equipment used by therapists such as a Rifton chair, gait trainer, standers, musical instruments, walkers, motor lab equipment, and augmented communication devices, and explain how the equipment is used during therapy sessions;
 - (C) discuss how different disabilities may impact a student's ability to participate in the learning environment;
 - (D) research and summarize findings on a variety of disabilities such as autism, intellectual disabilities, general learning disabilities, and Down's Syndrome; and
 - (E) discuss how to support students with disabilities based on an identified need.

Peer Assistance for Students with Disabilities II

- (a) General requirements. Students shall be awarded one-half credit for the successful completion of the course.

(b) Introduction.

- (1) In this course, the peer assistant will evaluate the impact of their relationship with self and others in order to enhance skills to aid each learner with special needs toward independence and social acceptance.
- (2) The peer assistant will be introduced to the purpose of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and appropriate long- and short-term goals for students with disabilities. The peer assistant will also acquire a basic knowledge of special education program services provided in the district or charter school and become an integral part of instructions, communication, and relationship building in the classroom.
- (3) As a peer assistant, the student will be able to articulate the rights of confidentiality protected by federal laws and comply with federal laws.
- (4) The peer assistant will apply appropriate techniques, routines, and procedures to support their peers' socialization and learning in the classroom.

(c) Knowledge and Skills.

- (1) Peer assistant skills. The peer assistant understands the importance of developing supportive and trusting relationships with students receiving special education services. The student is expected to:
 - (A) provide assistance to students with disabilities with limited supervision;
 - (B) assess the learning environment and provide appropriate interventions based on the needs of the student receiving assistance;
 - (C) provide support to individuals and groups of individuals receiving assistance in a social environment;
 - (D) practice with the student receiving assistance on communication skills appropriate for the work place, community, or social setting;
 - (E) collaborate with the student receiving assistance to develop goals and monitor the student's progress; and
 - (F) use positive reinforcement to encourage a supportive learning environment.
- (2) Management and communication. The peer assistant identifies and uses techniques for managing learning and behavioral outcomes with assistance from and in consultation with the classroom teacher. The student is expected to:
 - (A) select and implement effective cueing and prompting techniques in a general education setting;
 - (B) identify repetitive and self-stimulating behaviors, when they occur, and implement appropriate refocusing techniques;

- (C) predict behavior antecedents in the learning environment and use the skills learned to prevent outbreaks that may occur or redirect behavior as needed;
 - (D) support communication skills by helping the student receiving assistance to select the most appropriate communication methods for sharing wants and needs such as pointing, gesturing, and using picture exchange communication system, or an electronic device;
 - (E) assess cueing and prompting options on a scale of least invasive to the most invasive and select the least invasive method of support necessary when cueing and prompting the student;
 - (F) provide support and encouragement to the student receiving assistance when the student attempts new activities or ways to participate in activities;
 - (G) provide feedback to teachers about the level of involvement in activities of the student receiving assistance; and
 - (H) initiate suggestions to the classroom teacher about ways for peers to accomplish tasks.
- (3) Management and confidentiality. The peer assistant understands the purpose of the areas addressed in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) including long- and short-term goals, special education options, and students' rights of confidentiality. The student is expected to:
- (A) discuss standard components of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
 - (B) explain the relationship of Individuals with Disabilities ACT (IDEA) and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
 - (C) identify different special education programs designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities;
 - (D) define least restrictive environment (LRE) and explain reasons for placing students in the least restrictive environment for learning;
 - (E) support the student receiving assistance in the least restrictive environment by serving as an assistant;
 - (F) define progress-based monitoring;
 - (G) identify how progress-based monitoring is used to help students with disabilities progress towards accomplishing short- and long-term goals; and
 - (H) maintain confidentiality as it applies to students receiving special education services in all settings.

- (4) Learning styles. The peer student identifies personal learning style and how learning styles may impact relations with peers. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify and discuss different learning styles;
 - (B) identify personal learning styles using an intelligence model survey; and
 - (C) assess learning styles of students with disabilities within the classroom setting.
- (5) Support services. The peer assistant assists with support services provided to students with disabilities in an educational setting. The student is expected to:
- (A) assist as appropriate with the use of equipment such as a Rifton chair, a gait trainer, standers, musical instruments, walkers, motor lab equipment, and augmented communication devices during therapy sessions;
 - (B) assess any signs of discomfort or frustration exhibited by the student receiving assistance when using therapeutic equipment and convey this information to the teacher to determine to appropriate methods for assistance such as providing distractions, encouragement, or discontinuing the activity;
 - (C) determine appropriate wait-time and level of support needed during therapy;
 - (D) research therapeutic career fields such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, music therapy, adaptive physical education, speech therapy, and assistive technology; and
 - (E) discuss appropriate therapies to address specific special needs of the student receiving assistance.

Recommended Resources and Materials:

University of Utah: Positive Techniques for Positive Behaviors

http://healthcare.utah.edu/uni/home/resource_pdfs/tools_techniques_positive_behaviors.pdf

Bloom's Taxonomy

Family Educational Rights and Privacy ACT (FERPA)

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/quid/fcpo/ferpa/index.html>

YouTube: FERPA <http://youtube.com/watch?=5XpRGd8044>

Recommended Course Activities:

- Orientation
- Daily journaling

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- Social activity log
- Develop and teach a lesson
- Assist classroom teacher: hands-on learning and modeling
- Model appropriate behaviors

Suggested methods for evaluating student outcomes:

- Weekly journal activity
- Develop and teach an instructional activity
- Social activity log (outside classroom setting)
- Research projects

Teacher qualifications:

- High School – Special Education EC-12
- Secondary Special Education (Grades 6-12)
- Special Education: Early Childhood – Grade 12

Additional information: