



This guide offers suggestions for presenting **Curriculum Modifications: Peer Support**. This in-service suite includes a PowerPoint presentation and supporting materials. Please use and adapt these materials as needed for specific audiences.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- PowerPoint presentation (20 slides)
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activity:
 - » *Peer Pairing* (Parts 1 and 2)
- Tips for Teachers
- Flip chart or similar large paper, and markers for writing participant ideas

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide participants with a deeper understanding of one type of curriculum modification: *peer support*.
- This is one in a series of in-service suites on curriculum modifications. If participants need a basic introduction to curriculum modifications before focusing on the eight general types, please reference the *Curriculum Modifications: An Introduction* in-service suite; for a brief review, reference the *Tips for Teachers* handout from that suite.
- Participants are encouraged to consider how using peer support can increase the participation of specific children in their class.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to learn strategies involving peer support based on the specific needs, strengths, and interests of individual children.
- Many of the examples provided in this in-service suite can support a variety of children, based on a variety of needs. Consider adapting the scenarios and supplementing with your own to fit your particular audience.

NOTE

The *Helpful Resources* and *Tools for Supervisors* handouts are overarching tools that apply to all of the in-service suites in the Curriculum Modifications series. They can be found in the *Curriculum Modifications: An Introduction* in-service suite.



SLIDE 1: CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS: PEER SUPPORT

Introductions:

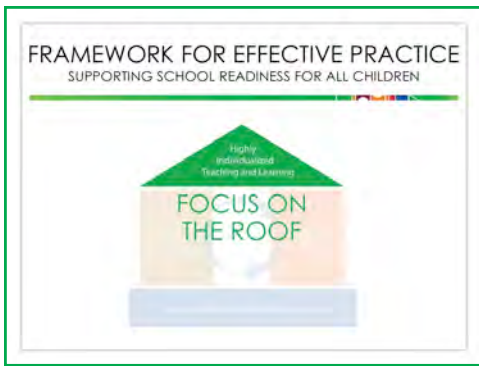
- Begin the training by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves (where they are working, their current roles, etc.)
- Conduct an icebreaker related to using *peer support* to promote participation.

Example: What improvements have you made in *your* life with the help of a friend?

Possible answers:

- Learning from a friend to play the guitar
- Going to the gym more frequently with an active friend
- Improving teaching practices by observing a respected colleague
- Trying new recipes with the encouragement of a friend who loves to cook
- Accepting the help and comfort of a friend during a difficult time





SLIDE 2: NCQTL'S FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Introduce NCQTL.

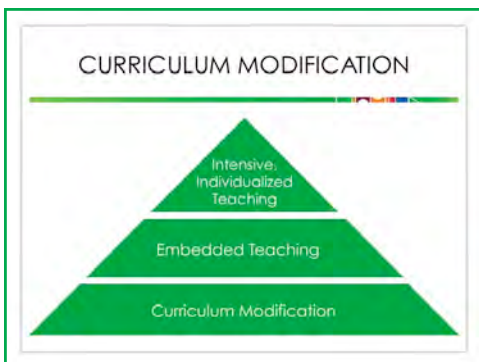
The four components of the House Framework support school readiness for all children.

After the foundation of the house is secure and all the indicators of a high-quality early childhood program are in place, there may still be children who are struggling to participate or to maximize their potential.

These children may include:

- A child who isn't making progress and needs extra support in a particular area of learning.
- A child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- A child who is a dual language learner (DLL).
- A child who seems to be excelling in some areas of learning and in need of more challenge.

All these children can be supported or challenged, based on their unique needs, by using the teaching strategies introduced in the roof.



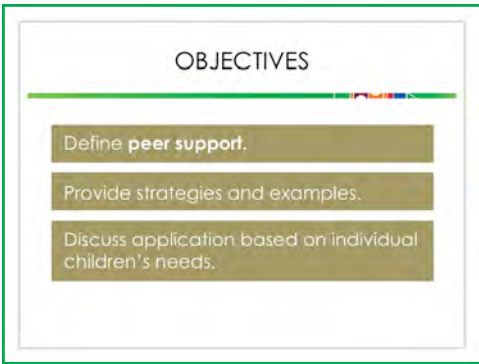
SLIDE 3: CURRICULUM MODIFICATION

The roof portion of the Framework for Effective Practice is separated into three tiers of highly individualized teaching: *Curriculum Modification*, *Embedded Teaching*, and *Intensive Individualized Teaching*. In the roof, the levels of support intensify from the bottom tier to the top.

Curriculum Modification is the bottom tier of the roof. This tier is about making *small* changes or additions to classroom activities that have a *big* impact on a child's engagement and learning.

This in-service suite focuses on how, with some careful planning, peer support can be used to promote children's participation and learning.





SLIDE 4: OBJECTIVES

Objectives for the presentation:

- Define peer support.
- Provide strategies and examples.
- Discuss application based on individual children's needs.

The last objective refers to the learning activities, which encourage participants to think about how peer support can be integrated into the classroom curriculum to promote the participation of individual children.



SLIDE 5: WHAT IS CURRICULUM MODIFICATION?

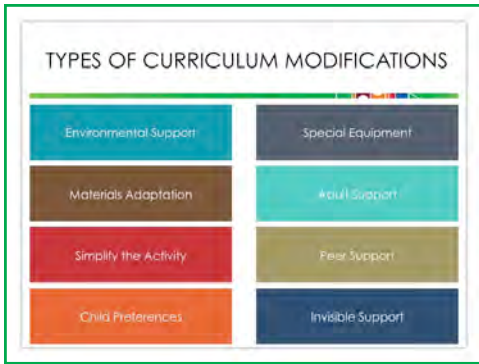
Definition: A curriculum modification is a change to the classroom activity or materials in order to facilitate or maximize a child's participation in planned activities, interactions, and routines. Curriculum modifications do not significantly alter the content, scope, or sequence of a curriculum

A curriculum modification:

- Increases a child's ability to participate.
- Requires just a little extra thought and planning.
- Is easy to implement.
- Has a fairly immediate impact if it's going to work.
- Does not need additional resources, in most cases.

A curriculum modification is a small change that can make a powerful impact on a child's participation, sense of belonging, and opportunity to learn.





SLIDE 6: TYPES OF CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS

Classroom activities and routines can be modified and adapted in a variety of ways. The eight general types of curriculum modifications are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Environmental support | Special equipment |
| Materials adaptation | Adult support |
| Simplify the activity | Peer support |
| Child preferences | Invisible support |

The focus of this in-service suite is on peer support.

NOTE

Some examples of the modifications in this presentation can fit into other categories *in addition* to peer support (i.e., modifying the social environment, invisible support). Encourage participants to focus on children’s individual needs and interests rather than the type of modification that is being discussed.

EMPHASIZE

Focus on the strategy that is the best fit for the child.



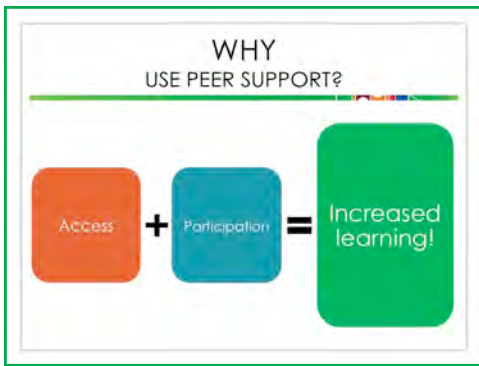
SLIDE 7: PEER SUPPORT

Definition: “Utilizing peers to help children learn important objectives.”

Reference for definition:

Sandall, S., & Schwartz, I. (2008). *Building blocks for teaching preschoolers with special needs*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.





SLIDE 8: WHY USE PEER SUPPORT?

Teachers work hard to develop lessons that get each *individual* child *actively involved* in learning. Even with the most thoughtful lesson plans and well-structured classrooms, some children still struggle to participate or to maximize their potential. Simple modifications to the curriculum, such as the use of peer support, can help these children progress.

More specifically, teachers who modify activities and materials based on individual needs and strengths ensure that children are *not bound by a single way of participating*. Successful learning can then take place in a variety of ways.

Access + Participation = Increased Learning

- Modifications provide **access** to planned activities, interactions, and routines.
- Increased access leads to a higher level of **participation**.
- Participating in a meaningful way provides a greater opportunity for **learning**.

Other reasons to use peer support:

- Some children respond better to peers than to adults.
- Peer support benefits the child in need of support *and* it gives the peers who are helping a chance to demonstrate strengths and skills.
- A culture in which peers support one another promotes trusting relationships and a caring classroom community.





EMPHASIZE *

Observe children closely to identify supportive peers.

SLIDE 9: QUALITIES OF SUPPORTIVE PEERS

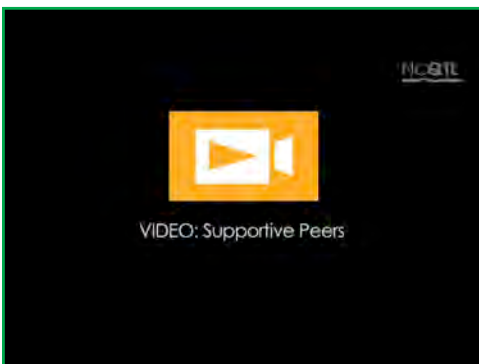
When implemented with intent, peer support can encourage a child to participate at a higher level. In the process of selecting one peer to support another, consider the answers to the following questions:

- How well do the strengths of the peer complement the needs of the child who is struggling to participate?
- Does the peer seem willing and eager to help?
- Does the child in need of support seem receptive to help (or encouragement) from peers in general? From the specific peer you have in mind?

In order to make these decisions, take time to observe the children closely as they interact with each other throughout the day.

Children with the following characteristics tend to be strong peer helpers:

- Caring (concerned for others' well being)
- Patient (avoid making others feel they're a source of frustration)
- Flexible (comfortable varying from a routine or activity)
- Talkative (eager to engage others in conversation)
- Playful (lighthearted with a sense of humor)
- Positive (generally happy; usually see the good in people and situations)
- Affirming (openly encourage and celebrate the success of others)
- Enthusiastic (show interest and enjoyment in activities or opportunities to discover and learn)



Length of video: Approximately 43 seconds

SLIDE 10: VIDEO: SUPPORTIVE PEERS

Introduce the video.

This video shows different examples of peer support.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Possible questions:

- How do you encourage peers to help each other in your classroom?
- Is there a supportive peer in your classroom who comes to mind? What qualities make this child a strong peer helper?





EMPHASIZE *

A teacher can plan for and implement peer support based on careful observation of children's strengths and needs.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

PEER PAIRING

This is a two part activity.

Part 1: Participants think about which children in their class would be strong peer supports, and why.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Peer Pairing* learning activity and review the directions for Part 1.

NOTE

This activity can be completed individually or in classroom teams.

PEER SUPPORT STRATEGIES

INVITE A PEER TO...



Encourage



Model



Help

SLIDE 11: PEER SUPPORT STRATEGIES

To increase a child's participation, encourage a peer to:

- Offer encouragement and enthusiasm.
- Be a model.
- Act as a helper.

NOTE

The adult's role in planning and implementing peer support is not always obvious. Give the participants opportunities throughout the presentation to think about how teachers facilitate peer support behind the scenes.



PEERS CAN ENCOURAGE



SLIDE 12: PEERS CAN ENCOURAGE

Peers can offer encouragement in different ways. They can be:

- Interested in particular activities or tasks and eager to share.
- Enthusiastic about a task or activity, or learning in general.
- Naturally affirming when they see the efforts and success of their peers.

Enthusiasm is contagious; it can be just the right amount of support a child needs to persist and succeed in an activity or task.

Photo 1

Issue: A child is hesitant to play in groups and rarely chooses the dramatic play area.

Modification: The teacher pairs her with a preferred peer who is excited about this area and likes to get others involved.

Photo 2

Issue: A child is working on improving his gross motor skills.

Modification: The teacher pairs him with an encouraging peer who loves to play with the red bouncing ball during recess.



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 31 seconds

SLIDE 13: VIDEO: A PEER ENCOURAGES WRITING

Introduce the video.

In this video, the teacher has paired a child who is discouraged by the difficulty of handwriting with a peer who speaks the child's home language and is excited about rainbow writing (writing each letter of his name in a different color).

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Possible questions:

- Although the teacher's planning wasn't shown in the video clip, this example of peer support would not have happened if the teacher hadn't **planned it in advance**. How do you think the teacher helped make this interaction successful?
- Is there a time when you paired **an enthusiastic peer** with a child who wasn't participating at the desired level? Examples can be shared with a neighbor or with the group.



PEERS CAN MODEL



SLIDE 14: PEERS CAN MODEL

A willing and proficient peer can be a wonderful model for a child with emerging skills. A teacher can simply position a child with emerging skills next to a peer who naturally demonstrates the desired skill at predictable times. Or, as needed, the teacher can briefly ask the peer to model the skill. For example, “Maria, can you show Frankie what the waiter does at your restaurant?”

Photo 1

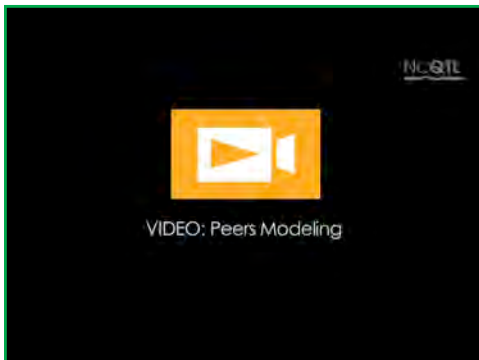
Issue: A child has limited play skills and tends to become disruptive during choice time.

Modification: The teacher pairs him with an advanced learner who is very creative during choice time.

Photo 2

Issue: A child is easily distracted during transitions in the hallway.

Modification: The teacher pairs him with two children who model the behavior that’s expected in the hallways and can provide gentle reminders.



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 21 seconds

SLIDE 15: VIDEO: PEERS MODELING

Introduce the video.

This video shows two examples of teachers facilitating peer modeling. The video can be paused between clips to take comments and questions.

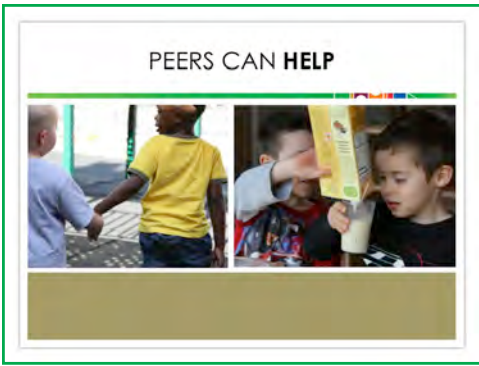
- *A Peer Models English*—A girl who speaks both Spanish and English models an English word for a girl who is learning English and whose first language is Spanish.
- *A Peer Models Cutting*—A boy who has just learned to cut his food is eager to model how to use a knife and fork for his friend across the table.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

- Invite participants to share comments and questions.
- Ask them to think of a time when they encouraged **peer modeling** to increase a child’s level of participation. Examples can be shared with a neighbor or with the group.





EMPHASIZE *

Ask for assistance from peers who enjoy helping others.

SLIDE 16: PEERS CAN HELP

Some children naturally enjoy helping, and feel proud when asked to help other children master a task. This is an effective way for teachers to promote peer relationships and increase the participation of all children in the class.

Photo 1

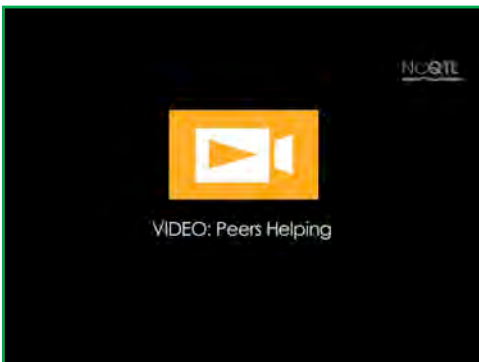
Issue: A child often delays when it's time to line up after recess to come inside.

Modification: The teacher pairs him with a patient and affirming friend who takes his hand to help him line up.

Photo 2

Issue: A child is not yet able to pour milk without spilling.

Modification: The teacher pairs him with a peer who likes to pour milk for others at his table.



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 37 seconds

SLIDE 17: VIDEO: PEERS HELPING

Introduce the video.

This video shows two examples of a peer helping. The video can be paused between the two clips to take comments and questions.

- *A Peer Supports Walking*—one child helps another who is hesitant to use his walker to get from place to place.
- *A Peer Helps With Shoes*—one child helps another who has not yet learned to put her shoes on independently.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

- Invite participants to share comments and questions.
- Ask them to think of a time when they encouraged **peers who enjoy helping** to increase a child's level of participation. Examples can be shared with a neighbor or with the group.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

PEER PAIRING

Part 2: Participants work alone or with classroom teams to think about children in their class who are in need of support. These children are then paired with peers from the list of supportive peers that was completed in Part 1 of *Peer Pairing*.

HANDOUT

Refer to the learning activity *Peer Pairing* and review directions for Part 2.

NOTE

Ask participants who are not currently working with children to recall a child from past experience or think of a niece, nephew, or a grandchild.



Length of video: Approximately 1 minute and 46 seconds

EMPHASIZE

Creating a culture of membership and inclusion starts with the teacher.

SLIDE 18: VIDEO: A COMMUNITY OF HELPERS

Introduce the video.

In this video, participants see that *all* children have strengths. Each child can be given the opportunity to make valuable contributions to the classroom community.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Refer participants back to the *Peer Pairing: Part 2* learning activity. Have them think about the children they identified that were in need of support. Ask them to list the *strengths* that those children have. Then ask them to **think of a way those children, with their skills, can contribute** to the classroom community.

NOTE

For more tips on creating a caring classroom community, refer to the *Building Relationships: Creating a Caring Classroom Community* in-service suite from the foundation of the House Framework.



REVIEW

Curriculum modifications promote participation.

Peer support: Invite peers to...

- Encourage
- Model
- Help

TWO outcomes in ONE strategy:
SUPPORT and MEMBERSHIP

EMPHASIZE *

Two outcomes in one strategy:
support and **membership**

SLIDE 19: REVIEW

A curriculum modification is a small change that can make a big impact on a child's level of participation in your classroom.

Peer support is one of eight general types of curriculum modifications. Strategies include encouraging a peer to:

- Offer encouragement and enthusiasm.
- Model a skill.
- Act as a helper.

Encouraging all children to use their strengths and support others not only **promotes the participation** of those who are struggling, but instills in *all* children the sense that they are **valued members** of the classroom community.

HANDOUT

Distribute handouts if not distributed during presentation.

Based on participant roles:

- Distribute and review *Tips for Teachers*.
- Distribute and review *Tools for Supervisors*.
- Distribute the *Helpful Resources* handout and review key resources.

NOTE

In-service suites are available for each of the eight types of modifications. Refer to these as needed, based on your participants' level of understanding of curriculum modifications.



FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

SHARE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS:

- Work with a team member from your classroom to determine which children in your class might benefit from a supportive peer who:
 - » Offers encouragement and enthusiasm.
 - » Models a skill.
 - » Acts as a helper.
- Think of appropriate peer pairings and make a plan.
- Determine who will be responsible for facilitating the peer interactions during particular activities and routines throughout the day.
- Give it a try!



SLIDE 20: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources.