

Activity 1

Supporting peer relationships

In this activity, read the examples for supporting peer relationships. Discuss and record how you help students to connect with and learn from each other in your school or class.



Working individually to begin with, read the handout (see over) of suggestions for supporting peer relationships.



In pairs or small groups, discuss the examples. Identify strategies that are also used in your school or classroom.

Discuss the other ways you support students to connect with each other.



Record the strategies on the blank worksheet.

Activity 1

Supporting peer relationships (continued)

How do we support students to connect with each other?

In what ways are students in our class similar to each other? How do we highlight this?

Some students like the same sports – Abbey is a soccer player just like others in the class. We use our knowledge of students to highlight their shared interests to each other.

How do our students communicate a desire to join in with others? How do we support this?

We provide models of ways to ask each other to join in social activities. We make resources for individual students, such as a photo book, and teach all students about the communication and what it means. We model ways to play and interact, such as taking turns.

How do we provide opportunities for social interactions within learning tasks?

We set up learning tasks that require people to work together and where part of the criteria for success is to illustrate that everybody has contributed to achieving the shared goal. Sometimes we use behavioural supports. These are rewards that involve all the students. For example, most students see activities such as playing computer games as being cool. When a student has earned a reward, such as computer time, we encourage them to share that experience with a classmate.

How do we use natural situations, such as classroom responsibilities, to foster relationships?

We use buddies to complete shared tasks such as daily helpers in the classroom and wider school.

We have students work in small groups to talk about their ideas before sharing them with the whole class.

How do we help students understand each other?

We produce booklets about some of our students that explain their needs, preferences and the best ways to support them. We share this information with other students in a respectful way that builds students' understanding of each other. We talk with the student and their family/whānau before sharing information about them with others.

How do we recognise when our support is a barrier to students' developing relationships with each other?

When students are talking with each other, the teacher aide moves away and leaves the students to it.

Activity 1

Supporting peer relationships (continued)

How do we support students to connect with each other?

In what ways are students in our class similar to each other? How do we highlight this?

How do our students communicate a desire to join in with others? How do we support this?

How do we provide opportunities for social interactions within the learning tasks we develop?

How do we use natural situations, such as classroom responsibilities, to foster relationships?

How do we help students understand each other?

How do we recognise when our support is a barrier to students' developing relationships with each other?
