



Promoting the Power of Peers: Peer-Mediated Interventions for Students with IDD

CDD Affiliated Faculty Seminar Series

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A Little About Me



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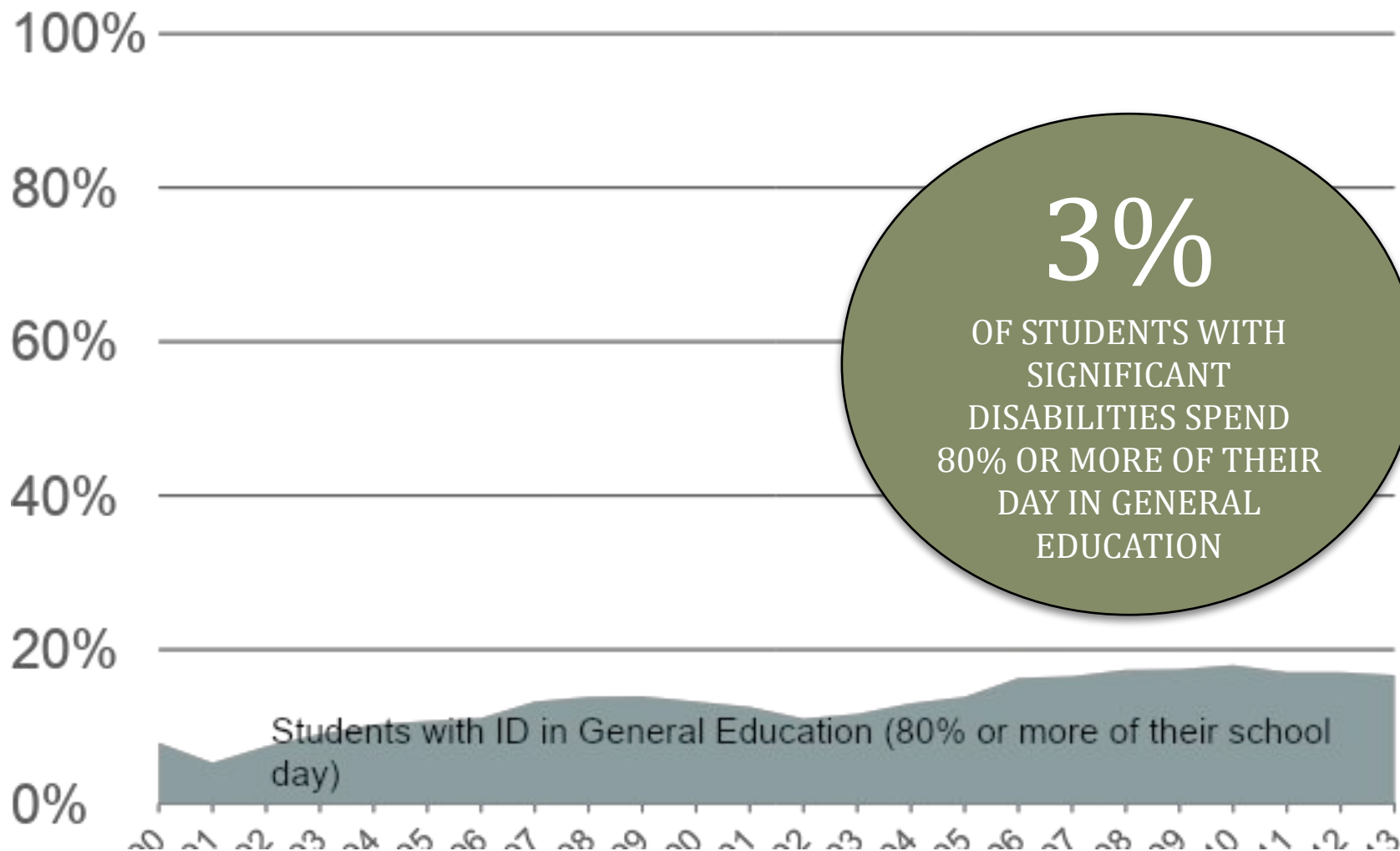
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ISLAND IN THE MAINSTREAM
MRS. JONES AND MRS. COOPER ARE
STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY FRED
DOESN'T FEEL LIKE PART OF THE CLASS.

ENGAGING APPROPRIATE SUPPORTS

NATIONAL TRENDS IN FULL INCLUSION



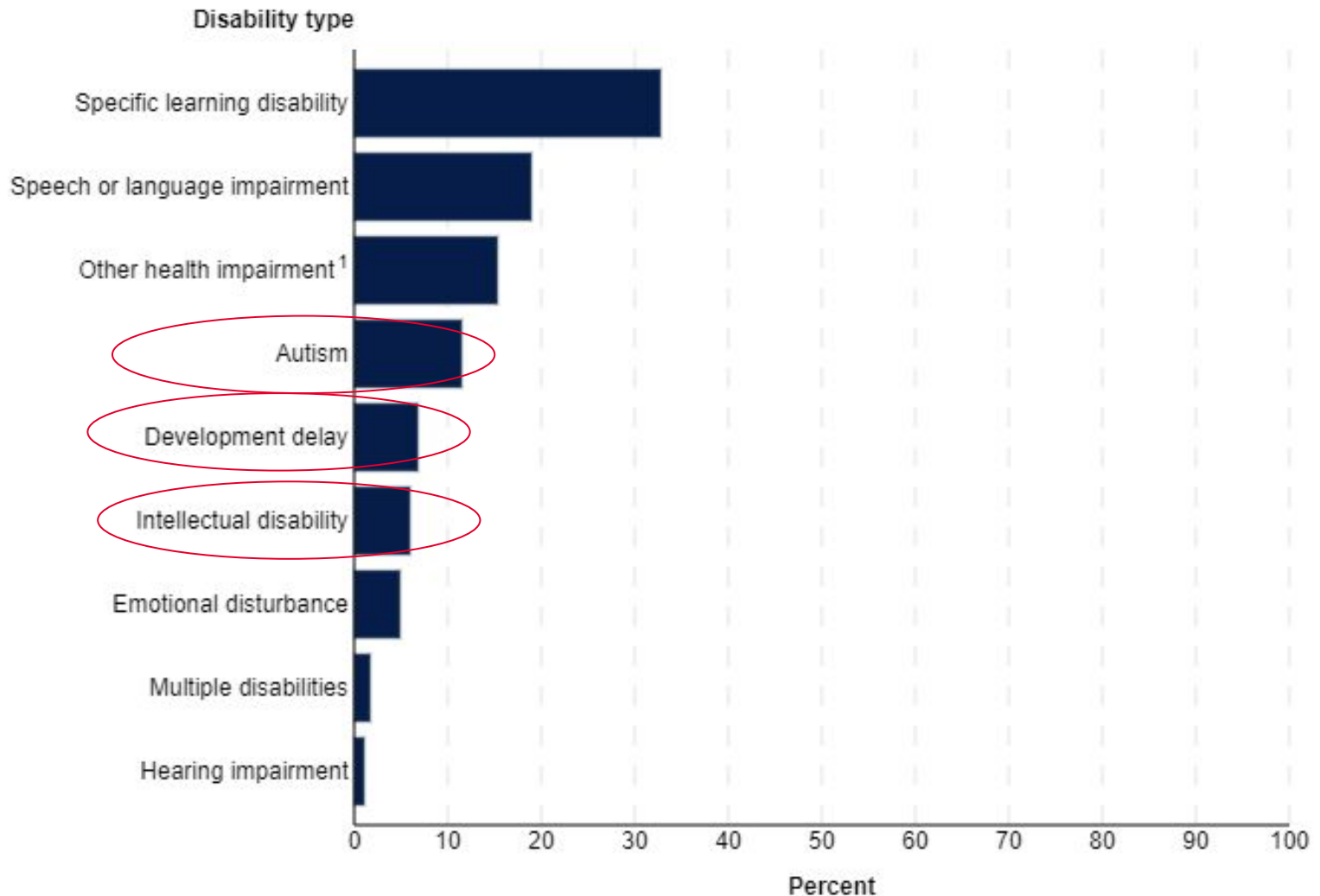
WHY INCLUSION MATTERS SO MUCH...

- Higher expectations
- Higher-quality IEPs
- More time engaged
- Greater IEP progress
- Enhanced communication skills
- More social interactions
- New friendships
- Changed attitudes
- Better post-school outcomes



Where Does IDD Fall Within IDEA?

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of students ages 3–21 served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), by selected disability type: School year 2020–21



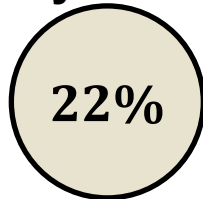
Did You Know...?



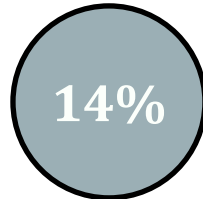
- Students with IDD often exhibit difficulties navigating the complexity of **social interactions** and **peer dynamics**.
- Peers without disabilities – especially at the secondary level – may be cautious to approach students with IDD without **background knowledge** or **proper guidance** from staff members, such as paraprofessionals or teachers.

PEER RELATIONSHIPS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

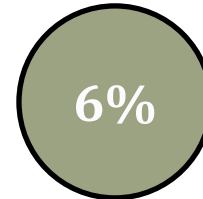
Frequently sees friends outside of school:



Intellectual Disability

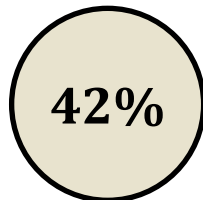


Multiple Disabilities

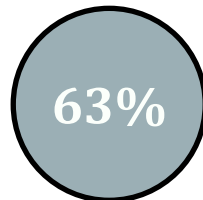


Autism

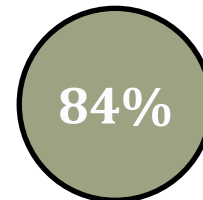
Never or rarely receives phone calls from friends:



Intellectual Disability

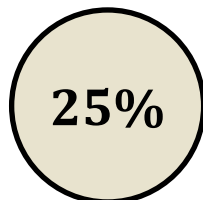


Multiple Disabilities

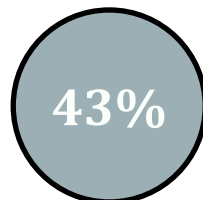


Autism

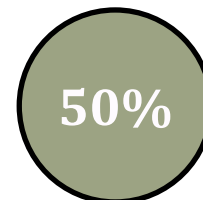
NOT been invited to other youth's social activities in past year:



Intellectual Disability



Multiple Disabilities



Autism

PEER RELATIONSHIPS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Never **visited with friends** during the previous year:

17%

Intellectual Disability

21%

Multiple Disabilities

32%

Autism

Never or rarely **receives phone calls from friends**:

50%

Intellectual Disability

64%

Multiple Disabilities

81%

Autism

Invited to other children's social activities during previous year:

80%

Intellectual Disability

75%

Multiple Disabilities

68%

Autism

What are Peer-Mediated Interventions (PMIs)?

PMIs:

- offer a formalized structure to catalyze (“jump start”) social interactions and friendships between peers with and without IDD
- have been firmly established as evidence-based approaches for facilitating peer relationships among students with and without disabilities

General Benefits for Students with IDD



- Facilitate peer relationships among students with and without disabilities
- Provide opportunities for academic and social/behavioral growth
- Include features such as error correction and individualized content alongside teacher supervision

Social Benefits for Students with IDD

- Improved quality and quantity of peer interactions
- Frequency and duration of social interactions
- Taking turns
- Sharing
- Interactions during play
- Opportunities to respond (e.g., prompting and reinforcing)
- Opportunities to practice prosocial behaviors



Social Benefits for Peers



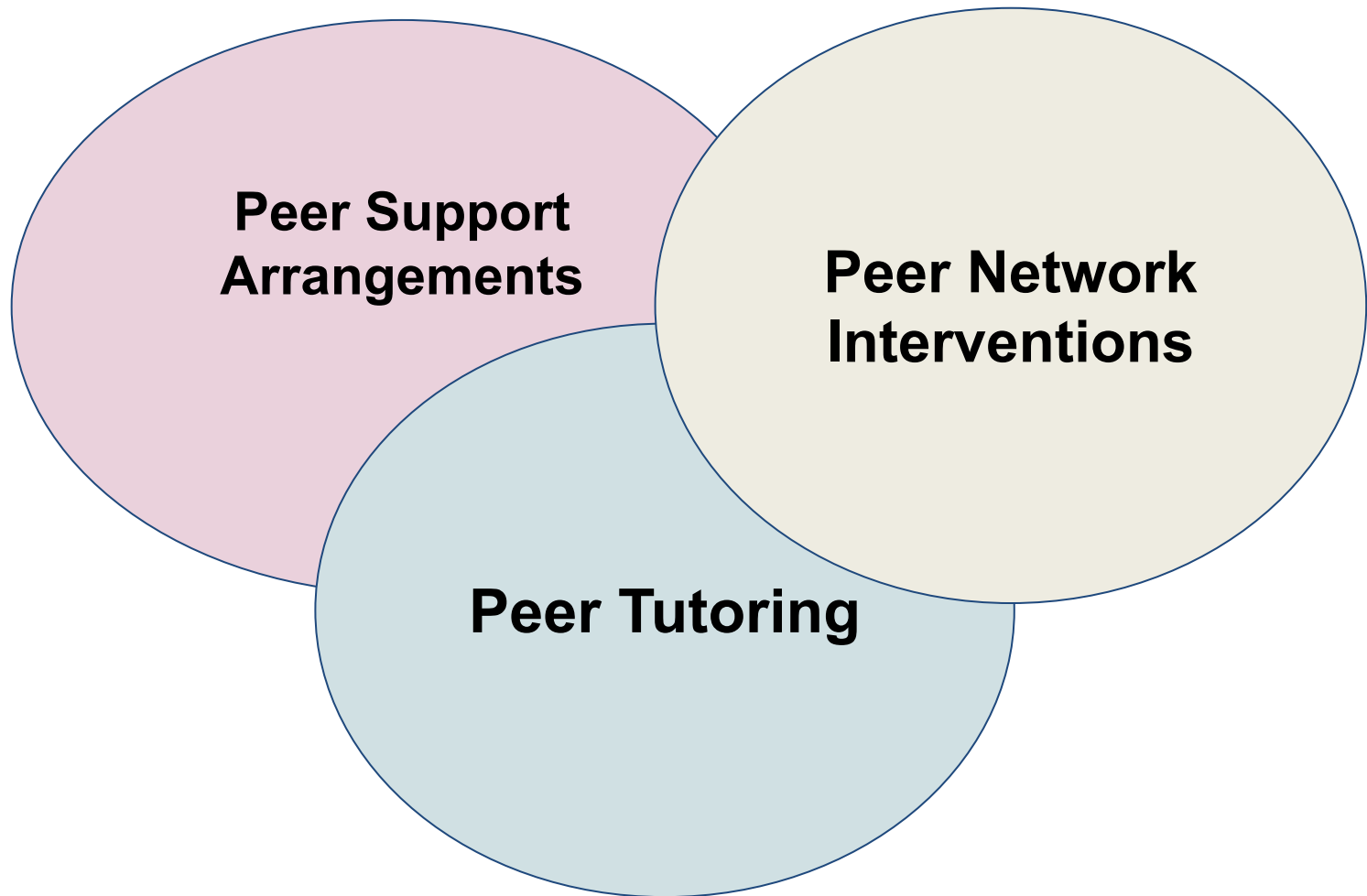
- Just as their peers with IDD, they are likely to benefit from structured relationships to facilitate social engagement and reciprocal friendships through the use of PMIs.
- They also gain an appreciation of diversity, awareness of disability issues, increased advocacy skills, and greater self-esteem.

Where Can PMI Be Used?

- General education classrooms
- Special education classrooms
- Employment settings
- Residential environments



Types of PMIs



Purpose of Our Study

1. Provide an overview of studies investigating the implementation of PMIs for students with IDD ages 3-21;
2. Summarize social outcomes for students with IDD; and
3. Synthesize limitations and recommendations for research and practice for students with IDD.

Summary of Reviews

- 43 reviews
 - 357 unique studies
 - 183 were PMI only studies
 - Published between 1981 and 2020
 - About 60% focused on students with autism
 - Most focused on a broad array of school levels
 - Fewer targeted preschool or elementary school only

Participants

About 4,254 participants with IDD were included across the 43 reviews.

Note: The exact number of unique participants is difficult to discern because of the repetition of studies across multiple reviews

Participants with IDD

- Limited demographic information was provided
 - Race/ethnicity => reported for 7% of participants
 - Gender => reported for 26% of participants
 - Specific ages were not provided for some participants
 - Ages 3-21
 - Mean age => 7.5 years
 - Grade levels (e.g., middle school) were reported

PMIs in Our Study

- Just over 50% named the type of PMI
 - ClassWide Peer Tutoring (CWPT)
 - Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)
 - Peer Training
 - Buddy System
 - Pivotal Response Treatment
- Often described as:
 - peer network interventions
 - peer support arrangements
 - peer-delivered instruction (for social skills)
 - lunch club
 - online skills training groups

Implementers

- Peers were the primary implementers in each study. Professional facilitation came from:
 - Teachers (general and special education)
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Speech/language pathologists
 - Clinicians
 - Researchers

Settings

- More than half were implemented in school settings
- Other settings included:
 - Camps
 - Child care centers
 - Clinics
 - Community settings
 - Home
 - Vocational settings

Data Collection

- Direct observation and video observation methods were most commonly used.
- Other methods:
 - Parent reports
 - Anecdotal records
 - Pre-post data
 - Social rating scale examples
 - *Social Responsiveness Scale*
 - *Teacher Perception of Social Skills*
 - *Social Skills Improvement System*

Quality Standards

- We examined the quality of the 43 reviews using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) checklist.
 - The quality of the reviews was mixed.
 - 55% received an acceptable JBI rating.
 - 9 reviews met all 11 JBI quality standards.

Peer Training Duration

- Peers received training individually or in groups:
 - 1 to 8 sessions daily
 - 1x/week for 6 weeks or 4 times a week for 2 weeks
 - Total training time lasted from 10 minutes to 4 hours

PMI Duration

- Duration varied greatly across the 43 reviews.
For example:
 - 3 days to 2 years
 - 5-45 minutes
 - 1-5 days/week

Student Outcomes

- Multiple social outcomes were reported that included:
 - Most focused on social Skills and Social Inclusion
 - Competing behaviors and social competence
 - Peer acceptance and social inclusion
 - Work-related and life skills
 - Play
 - Other
 - Non-verbal behaviors
 - Use of AAC devices with peers

Student Outcomes

- 52% of the reviews reported maintenance and/or generalization
 - Reflects whether students:
 - Maintained the social gains from PMIs
 - Were able to demonstrate positive social behaviors in different settings

Our Take-Aways

- PMIs are a powerful tool to facilitate lasting inclusive friendships between peers with and without IDD
- Prior research supports the strong evidence of PMI as an effective practice to increase social outcomes for students with IDD

Tips for Teachers

- Start small - with just 1-2 students per group and then grow gradually
- Make note of the activities that students do together so you can show others what inclusive friendships look like
- Engage peers to recruit other students
- Evaluate your progress by asking students and peers what they think

Resources to Get Started

- [Peer Mentoring to Support Students with Disabilities](#)
 - *This PD resource addresses practical and promising approaches for developing supports and fostering relationships among students with and without significant disabilities both in the classroom and throughout their educational journey.*

Reference

Bowman-Perrott, L., Gilson, C. B., Boon, R. T., & Ingles, K. E. (in press). Peer-mediated interventions for students with autism and developmental disabilities: A systematic review of reviews. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation*.



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