How Peer P.A.L.S. Meets the Requirements for a Highly Effective Program

Program Development and Commitment to Educational Standards

We took our lead from teachers, parents, students and administrators. Our social validity data led the way for continual development and changes in the program. So, what we ended up with is a program that:

1. is replicable, with a high likelihood that you would receive the same positive results facilitators had throughout our research.
2. is more likely to be used by staff.
3. is meaningful and has relevant goals for students with autism.
4. develops effective teachers by expanding their knowledge that focuses on professional development and improves special and general education teachers' skills.
5. enables teachers to effectively instruct learners, including students with disabilities.
6. is less work for teachers since the trainings and lessons are done for you.
7. increases learner access to effective instructional practices with demonstrated learner outcomes. (see our research)

Data-based Individualization (DBI)

The Peer P.A.L.S. program meets the need for DBI.

Our process is detailed below:

1. Our program begins with assessment
2. Students with autism begin with a 10 skill assessment. To begin we suggest choosing 2-3 goals
3. Goals(s) are chosen ex: 1. Socialization, 2. Communication
4. Baseline data on our one page tracking sheet
5. Intervention begins
6. Collect progress monitoring data to ensure student is making adequate progress, or now is the time to make adaptations
7. Our data system provides an individualized progress monitoring chart and ability to add additional progress monitoring if needed

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Most schools use a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), or Response To Intervention (RTI). Most schools use a 3 Tier System.

Peer P.A.L.S. can be used as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention. As a Tier 2, Peer P.A.L.S. would train neurotypical children on campus (peer pals). For the neurodiverse learners (children with autism), Peer P.A.L.S. can be used as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention.

High-Quality Content and Instruction

Peer P.A.L.S is designed to increase opportunities for successful social and communication interactions between students with autism and their non-autistic peers. By using evidence-based practices and an online platform, the autistic students develop skills in the domains of learning, socialization, communication and play through interactions with trained non-autistic peers. The program defines specific roles for a program coordinator, facilitators/ teachers, non-autistic peers and students with autism.

For peer pals and students, we use animated video to keep them engaged and motivated while delivering instructional content. For facilitators, one page, easy-to-follow checklists keep lessons running smoothly and ensure the instruction is given as intended.