

Byron Center High School LINKS Course Syllabus  
2016/2017

## **Links Course Syllabus** **2016/2017**

Byron Center High School: 8500 Burlingame Ave SW  
Byron Center, MI 49315  
(616) 878-6600

Course Teacher: Mr. Zeiler  
[jzeiler@bcpsk12.net](mailto:jzeiler@bcpsk12.net)  
616-878-6895  
Mrs. Hammer  
[shammer@bcpsk12.net](mailto:shammer@bcpsk12.net)  
616-878-6380- Marshall Elementary

The Purpose of the LINKS/Peer to Peer support class is to provide opportunities for the general education students to learn to relate to people with different needs and develop an increased understanding of individuals differences. LINKS are matched with a student with special needs and asked to model and reinforce socialization and independence skills.

**“Student with adequate social skills are more likely to have positive outcomes, while significant social difficulties place the person at risk for developing later behaviors (Koegel, Koegel, & Surrat, 1992) and interfere with the development of peer relationships.”**

**Course Description:** The student enrolled in the LINKS course will be a mentor, role model, and friend to a student with a disability. In this role, the LINKS program student will be with their assigned peer a minimum of one class period per day, and they will be interacting with their peer throughout social activities during the entire school day. In addition to being a mentor, role model, and friend they will assist the peer student in such things as appropriate classroom behavior, organization of assignments and supplies, and focusing on what the teacher is presenting or the classroom activities.

The LINKS student will attend biweekly Case Conferences to discuss the progress of their peer students, and contribute ideas on how to more effectively help the peer student progress towards his/her goals. During a normal school week, the LINK

student will also be required to complete weekly disability awareness lessons using an online classroom environment. The LINK will learn more about causes and prevalence of many common disabilities, methods/techniques for working with individuals with disabilities, developing social networking supports, and developing a social climate awareness, acceptance and inclusion.

**Course Objectives:** To promote, cultivate and nurture independence, appropriate social behavior, and life skills for life in and beyond high school.

The LINK course assists students in their consideration of a career in the Human Services Career Pathway. Teachers, Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and any more occupations will increasingly work professionally with individuals identified as having a variety of special needs. LINKS is a course that enables the students to make a difference in another person's life. In addition to the academic content of the course, there is ample time to apply what you are learning as you become involved in the life of another student.

### **Course Topics/Key Concepts and Units of Study:**

- Leadership skills-The ability to formulate a place of action, influence other students with their ideas, and lead others.
- Effective communication skills (both written and verbal)- communication with teachers, other students, and students with disabilities.
- Skills related to Human Services occupations- having a positive impact on others, helping succeed.
- Learn about Autism Spectrum Disorders and other disabilities: what they are, their prevalence, and techniques in working with these individuals.
- Problem solving techniques-you will be faced with circumstances that require imagination, perseverance, and patience.
- Applied psychology in dealing with others-you will learn psychological AND be able to apply them.
- Goal setting-formulating a goal, writing it down, and measuring your progress.
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)- gathering information, establishing a baseline and implementing a place for behavior change.

- How to understand and adapt to individual differences- tolerance and patience.
- Accepting responsibility- being responsible is a primary character trait for LINKS.
- Teacher skills and modeling techniques- this is how you will impact the student you are working with.
- Citizenship responsibilities- recognizing your role in society and the responsibilities you have.
- Reflective listening-learning how to let a person know you are listening.
- Group process skills- working in a group to solve a problem.
- How a behavior management plan works-exploring the makeup of a behavior management plan.
- How to identify and deal with stereotyping and discrimination- this is something special needs students face every day.
- How to advocate for others (and self)- learning how and when to speak up.
- Applying the six character traits: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.

**Required Materials:** Technology with access to the Internet and Schoology online class website, GREAT POSITIVE ATTITUDE!

**Required Reading:** Reading materials vary; all reading materials will be supplied by the instructor via hardcopy or online link.

**Meetings:** LINKS are required to attend biweekly case conference meetings. The case conference meetings will be held at 7:00 in the morning in room 301. During these meetings we will discuss what is going well or things that aren't going well, as well as discuss different disabilities and strategies. We also will talk about any articles you have been asked to read. The schedule is attached to the back of the syllabus. If you have a conflict at anytime please let Mr. Zeiler or Mrs. Hammer know

**Finals Requirements:** There is one final per semester. The final's details will be supplied for you on the Schoology course site, with ideas and requirements.

**Conduct & Confidentiality:** A LINK is expected to conduct themselves in accordance with all school rules and the classroom rules in which they are supporting. A LINK is privileged to sensitive and personal information regarding the student(s) they work with. LINKS are strictly forbidden to share any personal information regarding the student(s) they work with outside of the school or with any other student not involved with that student. Sharing personal or sensitive information may result in removal from the LINKS program.

**Your Ideas:** PLEASE! Share your ideas; they are invaluable! Do not be shy or afraid to share your thoughts, concerns, and ideas about your student or the LINKS program. You are with your student for over an hour each day; you observe behavior, surrounding, other student's behaviors toward your student, etc. You are on the front line and we need to hear your thoughts and ideas!

**Grading:** You will be graded on the following:

Daily attendance, participation in assigned meetings, completion of assignments as required, semester final exam, positive interactions with staff and student at Byron Center High School, being a good role model, being a good mentor, bonding indicators such as time sent with student with disability and interaction with them. If your assignment is turned in past the due date you will be given half the points possible. If it is turned in 7 days past the due date it will be a zero. Each morning meeting will be worth 10 points per meeting.

**Course Grading Guidelines:**

Participation/Involvement with student: 50%

Assignments/Quizzes: 20%

Meeting Attendance: 10%

Final Exam: 20%

## **Classroom Procedures**

### **Student responsibilities and expectations:**

- All link students are expected to personally “check-in” to Mr. Zeiler’s classroom prior to their “Link” hour. A check in sheet will be available to indicate the student’s presence for their class that day. If the student does not check in, an absence will be recorded for their assigned class hour. The students will need the.
- LINK students will be assigned to an individual class that is being taken by a peer student with a disability. The LINK will sit next to the peer student, assisting them socially, with organizational issues, attention issues, and academic support where needed. The LINK will be expected to abide by the classroom procedures and rules of the teacher in charge of each classroom, as well as show respect for that teacher and his/her authority.
- Because attendance, punctuality, and responsibility are character traits we strive to develop with your students with disabilities, these are very important traits for the LINK to display as a role model and mentor. Additionally, the LINK will attend their assigned class with a LINKS hall pass, and the student may use this pass to leave the room to address LINKS related issues. However, the classroom teacher reserves the right to allow the LINK to leave the room, and the LINK must ask permission to leave the classroom.
- School policy (as stated in the Student Handbook) for attendance will be closely followed. Any LINK student who exceeds the number of allowable absences will be held accountable to the school policy. Excessive absences and/or tardy records may result in lowered grades and denial of future LINK opportunities. Remember, a LINK is a role model for the peer students. It is the responsibility of the LINK student to keep Mrs. Hammer, Mr. Zelier, and the classroom teacher, informed as to reasons for tardiness and absences.

### ***LINKS MOTTO:***

***A LINK will respectfully, compassionately, and with the utmost integrity assist ALL students with special needs and ANY student in need!***



LINKS Students building relationships over breakfast. In classes students work on core curriculum, adult living skills, cooking, cleaning, organizational skills, time on task, and focus.

## Mission Statement/Purpose

LINKS is about creating connections within a diverse group of students and ensuring that all students are acknowledged for what makes them different and what makes them the same as their peers. The students enrolled in LINKS will be a mentor, role model, and friend to a student with a disability. The hope is that the relationship that is built will lead to other opportunities, and the chance for all students to become more accepted and united in a community based off understanding differences.

BYRON CENTER  
8500 Burlingame  
Byron Center, MI 49315

For More Information Contact:  
Sarah Hammer: 616-878-6380  
[shammer@bcpsk12.net](mailto:shammer@bcpsk12.net)

Jeremy Zeiler: 616-878-6895  
[jzeiler@bcpsk12.net](mailto:jzeiler@bcpsk12.net)



# BYRON CENTER

## LINKS Program



## About the Program:

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- LINKS is an elective class that can be taken by Juniors and Seniors.
- LINKS is offered for one semester, but can be taken for consecutive semesters.
- Students who are interested need to fill out an application to the class due to high demand.
- Students will be LINKed with a student who receives Special Education Services either within a resource room setting or self contained classroom.
- LINK students will be required to complete online assignments that have to do with topics related to special education.
- LINK students are required to attend 7:00am meetings once a week, or based off the schedule on the syllabus
- LINK students will have the opportunity to attend activities outside the school such as, but not limited to, bowling, restaurant outings, Whitecaps Baseball Game, Movies, Shopping trips.



## LINKS TESTIMONIALS

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*"The LINKS program really interested me because I love working with kids with disabilities and after high school that's the field I want to go into. I also wanted to learn from the student I was LINKed too. I absolutely got one of the most awesome guys around. Chris has taught me so much already and were only a couple of months into school. He has taught me about his disability and how he does certain things. He also has shown me how brilliant he is when he has to teach me half of the lessons so I can help him in his Geometry class. I wish LINKS was a program at Byron when I was in 9th grade, I would of done this every year if I had the chance."*

*~Sarah Ball Byron Center High School Senior.*

*"The LINKS program at Byron Center has been an amazing opportunity and experience. I have already learned so much about all the different types of disabilities in just a few months. I love working in Mr. Zelier's class because I have the chance to work with students of all different disabilities. These students have taught me so much and are the highlight of my day. I wish LINKS was offered before I was a senior because I would have taken it every year."*

*- Emma Fowler Byron Center High School Senior*

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# Links Course Application

## Links Course Description

LINKS is about creating connections within a diverse group of students and ensuring that all students are acknowledged for what makes them different and what makes them the same as their peers. The student enrolled in the Links course will be a mentor, role model, and friend to a student with a disability. In this role, the Links Program student will be with their assigned peer a minimum of one class period per day, and they will be interacting with their peer throughout social activities during the entire school day. In addition to being a mentor, role model, and friend, they will assist the peer student in such things as appropriate classroom behavior, organization of assignments and supplies, and focusing on what the teacher is presenting or the classroom activities.

The Link student will attend Case Conferences to discuss the progress of their peer student, and contribute ideas on how to more effectively help the peer student progress toward his/her goals. During a normal school week, the Link student will also be required to complete weekly disability awareness lessons using an online classroom environment. The Link will learn more about the causes and prevalence of many common disabilities, methods/techniques for working with individuals with disabilities, developing social networking supports, and developing a social climate of awareness, acceptance, and inclusion.

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approximate GPA:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade Level in 2016-17:** ☐9<sup>th</sup> ☐10<sup>th</sup> ☐11<sup>th</sup> ☐12<sup>th</sup>

**Numbers of absences from school in 2015-2016:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What Career would you like to pursue after high school?** \_\_\_\_\_

## Placement Considerations

*Please honestly mark any areas of academic strength or weakness that you have. Mark as many that apply. Academic strengths and weakness do not benefit or hinder students' acceptance into the Links course. This information is used in the scheduling process, and is used for placing students with peers in appropriate classrooms.*

### Student's Academic Strengths:

☐Math ☐Language Arts ☐Science ☐Social Studies ☐Art ☐Music ☐P.E. ☐Tech. Education

### Student's Academic Weaknesses:

☐Math ☐Language Arts ☐Science ☐Social Studies ☐Art ☐Music ☐P.E. ☐Tech. Education

## Recommendation Signatures

*It is important that students who participate in the Links course are independent and reliable students. Please have two teachers, counselors, extracurricular coaches or supervisors, or school administrators sign this application - indicating that they would recommend you as a candidate for this course.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name & Staff Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name & Staff Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Student and Parent Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applying Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Please include, and attach to your application, a short essay on why you would like to take this course and why you feel disability awareness is important in your school community. Please keep the essay to one page or shorter.