Peer-Mediated Intervention (PMI)
During PMI peers are trained to initiate and respond to bids of attention, how to model appropriate behavior, how to prompt, and how to reinforce appropriate behavior when interacting with students with disabilities (Herbert et al., 2020).

- PMI benefits socialization skills of students with extensive support needs.
- Paucity of research in outcomes for stakeholders other than students with disabilities.
- Paucity of research in the perspectives of all stakeholders.
- Current study builds on PMI research.
- Using findings to enhance future PMI programs.

Methodology
- Generic qualitative study
- Convenience Sampling: Treehouse Tribe
- Participants: Children with extensive support needs (3), typically developing children (3), parents (6)
- Semi-scripted and guided interviews
- Inductive and systematic analysis of data.

Findings & Results

Positive Outcomes for all Stakeholders
- Increase in confidence while socializing with all people
- Greater network of friends
- Developed empathy for others
- Demonstrated advocacy for others during and outside of the program.

Traits Associated with Successful Trained Peers
- Importance of peers being volunteers
- Elementary age peers are the target age group.

Components of a Successful Learning Environment
- Role of the adult facilitators
  - Maintain flow and positivity
  - Well-trained
- Role of peers: be themselves, play
- Design of Learning environment
  - Open, welcoming, inclusive
  - Multiple opportunities for interaction

Changes to the Program
- No changes (expansion of program)
- More Funding

Implications & Recommendations
- All stakeholders need more opportunities for interaction
- Inclusive settings need trained peers
- Voluntary participation is an important part of successful inclusive practices
- School Districts need PMI curriculums
- Adult facilitation is an important part of successful inclusive practices.
- PMI programs for elementary aged children are a top priority
- More funding for PMI programs.

Future Research
- Replication of current research on a larger scale
- Characteristics of trained peers
- Controlled exp. voluntary vs mandatory peers
- Trained peers’ middle, high school, and post school outcomes
- Trained vs. Non-trained peers in inclusive classrooms.

Stakeholder Quotes

“I’m more aware. I know I definitely wasn’t as aware of the different abilities of children. I always knew [my daughter’s school] has a Special Day Class, but I never knew the kids. I never knew the parents and just having that interaction has opened my eyes to all sorts of different worlds out there.”

“It teaches them not to be afraid, and I really like that. It’s like, ‘This person is different,’ or ‘This person is lashing out and this is why he is lashing out. It’s not because he’s angry or weird. It’s because his brain is different from your brain.’ And I really like that.”

“In the beginning, it was very hard for me because what they were saying to us was how thankful they were of our children. And they would just tell stories where before Treehouse Tribe their child was never asked to a birthday party. And so, [my daughter] had a birthday party, and she brought [two novice social peers]. The mom was just like over the moon. [My daughter’s school] has a Special Day Class, but I never knew the parents and the excitement around him, and all sorts of different worlds out there.”

“I feel like it’s a great opportunity for him to be with typically developing peers. A lot of times when you’re around typically developing peers, they’re not trained or they don’t feel comfortable and they don’t really have the skills needed to interact. Whereas the kids at Treehouse Tribe are – they have...this trained skill set. And so, it makes it a much more positive experience than just, for example, being in a regular softball group without anybody having any training.”

“I think it works really well. And like I said before, I think it teaches kids to have more empathy. And so, as they get older it really sticks with them. It’s not just towards folks who are on the spectrum. It’s like anyone, and I really, really like that.”

Research Question

What are the stakeholder perspectives of peer-mediated intervention in an inclusive after school program?