

Strategies for Presuming Competence

**Examine your
mindset**

**Question your
stereotypes**

**Use age-
appropriate talk**

**Support
communication**

Listen openly

**Teach peers and
others**

**Do not speak in
front of someone
as if they were
not there**

**Include in the
conversation**

Ask permission

Be humble

**Do not speak for
them**

**Assume that
every student will
benefit**

**Evidence of
understanding**

Use strengths

**Support access
to academics**

**Acknowledge in
the same way**

Strategies for Presuming Competence

- **Examine your mindset**—practice saying, “How can this work?” “How can this child be successful?”
- **Question your stereotypes**—how someone looks, walks, or talks does not tell you about how they think and feel.
- **Use age-appropriate talk**—examine your tone of voice and topic.
- **Support communication.**
- **Listen openly**—work to shed judgments.
- **Teach peers and others** how to interpret potentially confusing behavior.
- **Do not speak in front of someone** as if they were not there.
- In conversation, refer to the person in a way that **includes them in the conversation.**
- **Ask permission** to share information with others.
- **Be humble.**
- If possible, always let the person explain for himself or herself and **do not speak for them.**
- Assume that **every student will benefit** from learning age-appropriate academic curriculum.
- Look for **evidence of understanding.**
- Support students to **show understanding using their strengths.**
- Design adaptations and accommodations to **support access to academics.**
- Be sure to **acknowledge the presence of a person with a disability in the same way** you would acknowledge others.

“If you want to see competence, it helps if you look for it.”

—Douglas Biklen

Videos

- [5 Moore Minutes: Presuming Competence](#)
- [Under the Table: Shelley Moore TEDx Langley ED Talk](#)