

INCLUSION IS NOT A READINESS MODEL

IDEA is clear that all students, first and foremost, are general education students. Inclusion is not optional. Students do not have to earn their way into opportunities, whether that is a general education classroom, a friendship, or an extracurricular activity.

All students can participate and benefit from inclusion with individualized support.



PEER TO PEER

isn't one more thing,

IT IS THE

THING

If you could choose just one evidence-based practice that would have a far-reaching effect on the quality of life of students, choose Peer to Peer. It is not just an evidence-based practice, it is a way of being together that focuses on shared experiences in which peers have the opportunity to connect, and build communities where belonging is a priority.

When implemented with fidelity, no other “thing” has the potential to be as broadly impactful, having lifelong impact on students, families, teachers, schools, and communities.



START

USE DATA TO TELL THE STORY



Data is more than numbers and graphs, it is the story that tells us whether our teaching is working the way we intend for a student or a classroom. Without data, we are guessing and hoping that what we do is leading to progress.

Collecting data is just a first step. Summarizing and visualizing the data reveals the story that then guides us to make the best decisions.

START



EFFECTIVE

for all students;

ESSENTIAL

for some _____



Highly-effective universal strategies for academics, social competency, and behavioral support are essential for students who experience the world in a different way.

Students with ASD may require visual supports, self-management systems, differentiated instruction, and transition cues to be successful in school settings. The pleasant surprise is that these strategies create a learning environment that is more conducive to learning and social interaction for everyone.

START

FAMILIES.

**THE HEART OF THE TEAM,
NOT JUST PART OF THE TEAM.**

No one knows a student or loves a student the way a family does. Planning and decision-making need to be guided by the team's efforts to understand the life of the student both inside and outside of school.

As the heart of the team, parents help to set the vision for what the student needs now to build a life and future with many opportunities.



STÅRT



INDEPENDENCE

and _____

SOCIAL

COMPETENCY

only develop with

OPPORTUNITIES

Age-appropriate social skills develop with social opportunities and participation in grade-level integrated environments. Learning social skills in integrated settings with peers leads to natural experiences, real world feedback, and relationships.

The goal for students with ASD is the same as for all children - to be independent and have meaningful social connections.




START



**WE DID WHAT WE DID
WHEN WE KNEW WHAT WE KNEW.**

**WHEN WE KNOW BETTER,
WE DO BETTER.**



Our experiences and the ever-evolving research literature mean we are continually discovering new ways to work with students and families. We need to refrain from blaming ourselves or others for what we did in the past with good intentions.

Once we have new information, we have a responsibility to adjust what we do to reflect the most effective practices of today.

START



TEACH WHERE AND WHEN

Intense fascinations and preoccupations are a part of autism. At times, they might interrupt learning or routines and our tendency is to try to make them stop. However, it is important that we not withhold access to preferred interests or cause heightened anxiety by denying preoccupations. We want to provide a balance of learning and social success with validating preferences and needs.

Instead of saying "no," we can teach where and when. Teaching strategies may include: specifying times in the schedule to access interests, intentionally incorporating fascinations into learning activities, organizing social interactions around interest areas, or creating an outlet for a preoccupation.



START



ALL DECISIONS

are informed by the

LAW, RESEARCH,

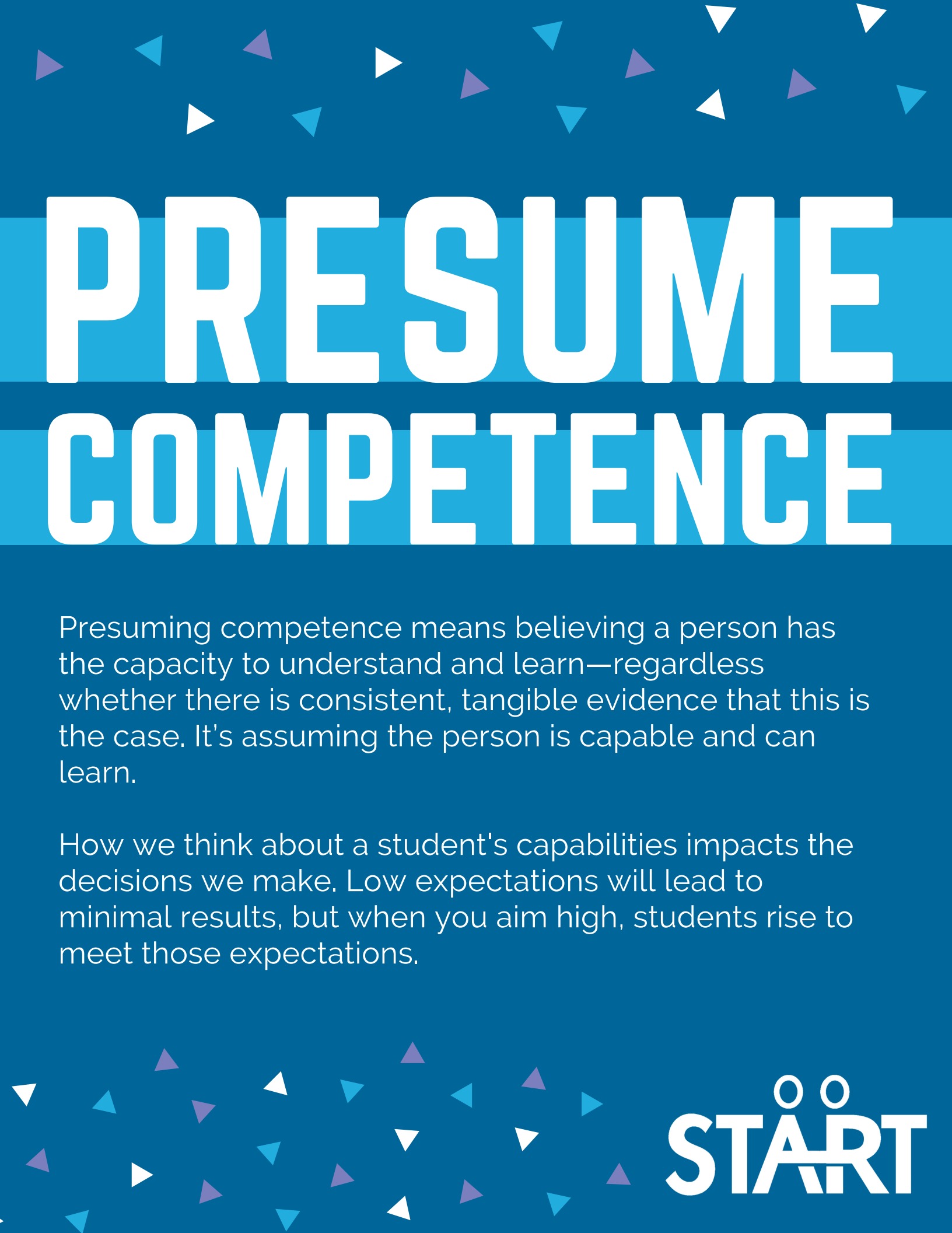
and

DATA

Move away from opinion debates, feelings, and anecdotes to an evidence-based decision making model.

When developing goals and designing educational plans, three key considerations are necessary for evidence-based decision making: 1) the requirements set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2) the research literature on evidence-based practices, and 3) student outcome and system data.

STÅRT

The background of the entire page is a solid blue color. Scattered throughout are numerous small triangles in various shades of blue, purple, and white, some pointing up and some pointing down. The main title is centered in the upper half of the page.

PRESUME COMPETENCE

Presuming competence means believing a person has the capacity to understand and learn—regardless whether there is consistent, tangible evidence that this is the case. It's assuming the person is capable and can learn.

How we think about a student's capabilities impacts the decisions we make. Low expectations will lead to minimal results, but when you aim high, students rise to meet those expectations.

The logo for 'START' is located in the bottom right corner. It features the word 'START' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Above the 'A' and 'R' are two small white circles, one above each letter, which together with the letters below form the 'O's of the word 'START'.

START



WRITE IT DOWN

WRITE IT DOWN

WRITE IT DOWN

Individuals with autism often have language processing differences and a propensity for visual learning. Therefore, visual supports are non-negotiable.

For some students it is text, for some, it is a picture, and for many, it will be both. When verbal instruction is not leading to student success, make the words visual. Write them down, draw a picture, or find a video model.

START

COMMIT. CREATE. ADVOCATE.

**A pledge to equity
& inclusion every day.**

We can raise awareness and encourage acceptance in April but more importantly, we must evaluate how we are advocating for inclusiveness throughout the year. Acceptance means individuals with disabilities, including ASD, are welcomed and valued.

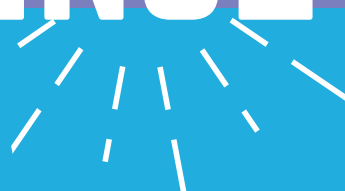
True acceptance is embodied by developing authentic relationships, guarding dignity, and prioritizing respect. Acceptance means belonging and participating in all aspects of school and community life. It is active and collaborative. When we commit to listening to all people and perspectives, we create spaces where true diversity and equity exist 365 days a year.

START



Independence Facilitators

FACILITATE INDEPENDENCE




The role of adults is to empower students to be as independent as possible in their learning, social interactions, and life activities rather than to serve as caretakers or protect them from risks or mistakes. Adults play a key role in facilitating the independence of students by intentionally supporting when needed, teaching tools that foster independence, and stepping back to make room for students to engage in age-relevant opportunities on their own or through interdependence with peers.

Adults keep in mind that independence may look different across the school day, in different settings, across classes, and with various people.



START



START SOMEWHERE

&

START NOW



Take a first step toward action today. There is no such thing as a perfect moment to start something new and you will not have more time tomorrow. The time to start something new or different is now.

Even a small step is movement forward and that momentum can spur a chain reaction. Adjustments will follow as we observe how our actions are working, or not working. Impactful discoveries, movements, and changes all happen following action - not when we stand still.

START