



# 5 Top Tips for Supporting Students with Intellectual Disability

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## WELCOME

- Recording available until 7<sup>th</sup> May
- Certificate available to download
- Visit [www.illumelarning.com.au/2026-5-top-tips](http://www.illumelarning.com.au/2026-5-top-tips)




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# 2026

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN EDUCATION SUMMIT

MELBOURNE – 20<sup>th</sup> May  
TOWNSVILLE – 22<sup>nd</sup> May  
BRISBANE – 25<sup>th</sup> May  
TOOWOOMBA – 26<sup>th</sup> May  
CHRISTCHURCH – 28<sup>th</sup> May  
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### **consider co-teaching**

**rethink your structures:  
one teach-one assist**

- **perfect structure for  
unplanned  
collaboration**
- **helpful for new teams**
- **rethink:**
  - ✓ Are you floating  
with a purpose?
  - ✓ Are you flip-  
flopping roles?



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# EMBRACE EVIDENCE-INFORMED SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS WITH DOWN SYNDROME

## WHY IT MATTERS

- Understanding a diagnosis helps you teach *intentionally*, not reactively
- Research provides a **starting point**, not a fixed “how-to guide”
- Every learner is different → get to know individuals and adapt to them

## EXAMPLES

**Communication:** Use visual supports (e.g. schedules, procedures, gestures)

**Memory & processing:** Break tasks into steps, reduce verbal load, use repetition

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Evidence builds your toolkit, the learner guides how you use it



## provide positive behavior supports

### sync up your support: CALM protocol

**COMFORT** [reassure the student, get out of crisis]

**AVOID CONTACT** [do not touch or restrain the student, if possible]

**LOWER YOUR VOICE** [speak in a soothing tone & co-regulate]

**MANAGE** [mind the environment]



### THE CALM PROTOCOL

THIS TOOL CAN BE REFERENCED DURING MOMENTS OF CRISIS TO HELP ALL STAFF MEMBERS (e.g. PARAPROFESSIONALS, TEACHERS, THERAPISTS) RESPOND TO STUDENTS WITH SHARED VALUES AND PRACTICES. IT IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR A BEHAVIOR PLAN; IT IS A GUIDE FOR THE ADULTS.

<b>COMFORT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ REASSURE THE PERSON.</li> <li>■ KEEP IN MIND THAT THE GOAL IS TO GET OUT OF CRISIS.</li> </ul>
<b>AVOID CONTACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ DO NOT TOUCH OR RESTRAIN THE PERSON UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY (e.g. IF THEY ARE IN DANGER).</li> </ul>
<b>LOWER YOUR VOICE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ SPEAK IN A SOOTHING, HUSHED TONE AND KEEP A PEACEFUL EXTERIOR.</li> </ul>
<b>MANAGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ KEEP OTHER ADULTS (AND STUDENTS) AWAY FROM THE AREA.</li> <li>■ IF NEEDED, ADAPT THE ENVIRONMENT (e.g. DIM THE LIGHTS).</li> <li>■ INTRODUCE USEFUL TOOLS, IF APPROPRIATE (e.g. PREFERRED MATERIALS).</li> </ul>

CALM (CRISIS)



## RE-THINK THE ROLE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS



### DEPLOYMENT

- Deploy in ways in which TAs supplement rather than replace the teacher
- Avoid a TA being allocated to an individual student



### PRACTICE

- Provide the LEAST amount of help FIRST
- Encourage independence- allow wait time, avoid over-prompting, don't hover, ask open-ended questions
- Assist student "readiness to learn"

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## embrace UDL

**top tip: start with the "slant board"**

- **Implementing UDL can be overwhelming as the framework is complex.**
- **Where do we start?**
- **Assess the tools that students with disabilities "bring" into the classroom. Some may be helpful supports for all.**



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# SPECIAL OFFER

Use code **BOOK** at  
checkout to receive a copy of  
'Don't We Already Do Inclusion'  
(plus a meet and greet with Paula where  
she'll sign your book!)

Valid until midnight AEST Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April for  
General Tickets – in-person events only  
*\*applies to new registrations only, 20 available*



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