

Support participation and confidence

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Helpful classroom strategies years 1-8' from the Guide: [Autism and learning](#)

Includes:

- Seek advice from parents
- Harness strengths
- Provide a predictable environment
- Establish routines
- Support transitions to anything new
- Allow more time for moving around the school
- Design the day to maximise participation
- Useful Resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Autism and learning](#)

Strategy: [Helpful classroom strategies years 1-8](#)

Suggestion: [Support participation and confidence](#)

Date

04 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/autism-and-learning/support-participation-and-confidence

Seek advice from parents

Listen and learn from whānau and ākonga.

Allow their insights to influence how you plan to provide support.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/186357831>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education, inclusive education videos \(NZ\)](#)

<https://vimeo.com/album/2950799>

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Harness strengths

Autistic students may demonstrate strengths that can be harnessed in the classroom.

These may include:

- strong visual-spatial skills, which help literacy
- non-verbal problem-solving skills, which help when structuring tasks in ways that motivate students
- auditory memory, which helps when learning socially-appropriate phrases for specific situations
- strong visual memory which supports skills such as spelling.

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Provide a predictable environment

Create predictable routines to reduce anxiety and allow students to manage themselves independently.

- ✓ Use personalised and class timetables
- ✓ Clarify expectations and teach appropriate behaviours
- ✓ Signal upcoming transitions
- ✓ Talk through last minute changes that may be startling to students
- ✓ Use task boards to break large tasks into components
- ✓ Develop strategies for times of anxiety
- ✓ Share key information across the school for example with staff, leaders and relief teachers.

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Establish routines

Wherever possible, build predictability into your classroom.

Support routines and spoken instructions with visuals.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/100662410>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education, inclusive education videos \(NZ\)](#)

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/2950799>

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Support transitions to anything new

Unexpected change and unfamiliar environments can increase anxiety for autistic students. Use this list as a guide for creating smooth transitions.

- Share information about the transition with whānau and ask for their advice.
- Design changes and new environments with and for ākonga.
- Preview changes if possible or support with layouts, images or video.
- Assess the new context or environments for potential issues, for example, sensory challenges.
- Discuss or brief students about transitions and changes of routine.
- Maintain consistent language, routines and systems that are familiar to the learner.
- Make connections to ākonga strengths, skills, and interests as part of the transition.

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Allow more time for moving around the school

Ākonga may need greater support in the following ways with the demands of secondary school. This may include:

- ✓ getting to and from classes – some may be later or need longer to pack up and transition to new classes
- ✓ navigating from one part of the school to the other
- ✓ getting started on tasks during class time
- ✓ moving through busy hallways and being around noisy environments
- ✓ trying new activities or responding to challenging questions or tasks.

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Design the day to maximise participation

Discuss with students what will support their participation and motivation.

Build these suggestions into your teaching practice.

- ✓ Check in with the student regularly.
- ✓ Connect learning to the student's interests.
- ✓ Establish clear classroom routines, expectations and rules.
- ✓ Provide task and lesson outlines.
- ✓ Break work into short manageable chunks.
- ✓ Schedule brain and movement breaks.
- ✓ Offer leadership opportunities and group roles based on the student's expertise and interests.
- ✓ Foster tuakana-teina relationships where students support each other.
- ✓ Provide easy access to quiet spaces for working or winding down.
- ✓ Develop and teach strategies to help students when they get stuck.
- ✓ Notice task avoidance or increasing anxiety and implement supports quickly.

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Useful Resources



The Learning Pit

Learners can develop learning strength through modelling what it's like to be stuck. This video example from junior learners shows how to keep trying when learning gets hard.

Publisher: Milton Hall Primary School

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