

Create structure and routine

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Design learning for all' from the Guide:

[Behaviour and learning](#)

Includes:

Provide a predictable environment

Establish routines

Plan times when structure is minimal

Use visual timetables

Support transitions

Build in predictable flexibility and novelty

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Design learning for all](#)

Suggestion: [Create structure and routine](#)

Date

05 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/create-structure-and-routine

Provide a predictable environment

Predictable whole-school routines and systems help students make sense of learning tasks and save time interpreting multiple ways of doing things.

- Do the same things, in the same order, and with the same expectations.
- Break down lessons into parts so students can manage their time.
- Use task boards or step-by-step tables to break large tasks into components.
- Offer consistent supports such as visuals, graphic organisers and peer helpers.
- Use class timetables.
- Signal upcoming transitions, for example, using traffic lights for the end of a task or music for clean up times.
- Talk through last minute changes that may be startling to students.
- Develop strategies for times of anxiety.
- Share key information across the school, with staff, leaders and relief teachers.

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Design learning for all](#)

Suggestion: [Create structure and routine](#)

Date

05 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/create-structure-and-routine

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>

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Design learning for all](#)

Suggestion: [Create structure and routine](#)

Date

05 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/create-structure-and-routine

Plan times when structure is minimal

Times when structure is minimal, such as free time, morning and lunch breaks and play times can be overwhelming for some learners. Work with students and whānau to plan these times for student success.

For example:

- Offer students two or three choices for free time activities
- Build a personalised routine for break and lunch times
- Create a visual choice board for students to select positive activities
- Build check in systems with duty staff
- Use a buddy to support students

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Design learning for all](#)

Suggestion: [Create structure and routine](#)

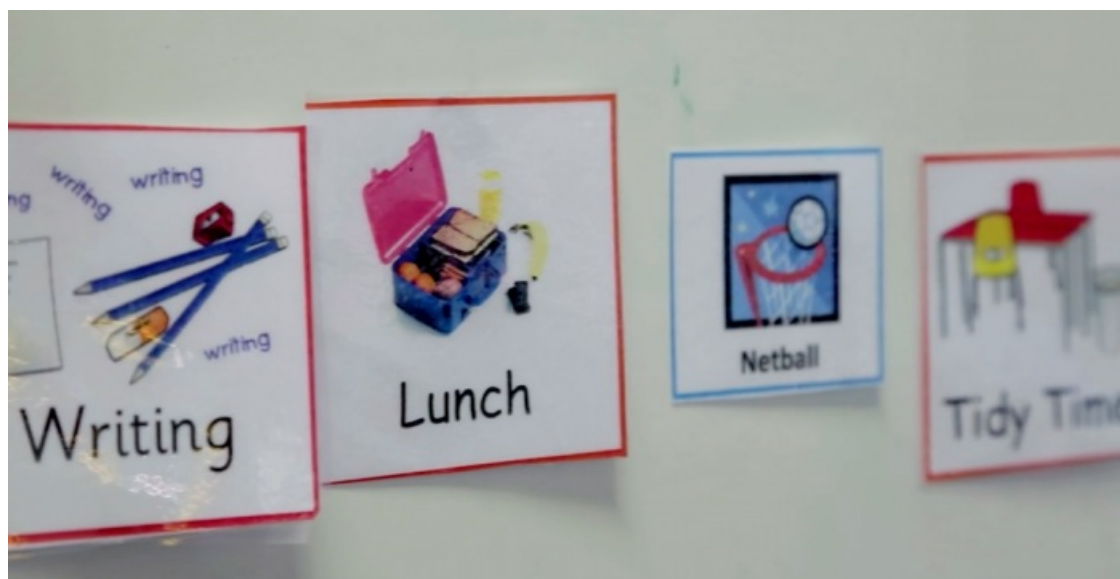
Date

05 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/create-structure-and-routine

Use visual timetables



[View full image \(527 KB\)](#)

Visual timetables are a key part of supporting students to know what is happening and organise themselves.

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Design learning for all](#)

Suggestion: [Create structure and routine](#)

Date

05 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/create-structure-and-routine

Support transitions

Unexpected change and unfamiliar environments can increase anxiety.

Work with ākonga and whānau to plan for times of change or stress.

- Share information about the transition with whānau and ask their advice.
- Design changes and new environments with and for students.
- Preview changes if possible or support with layouts, images or video.
- Assess the new context or environments for potential issues, for example, sensory challenges.
- Create opportunities for students to share concerns.
- Maintain consistent language, routines and systems that are familiar to the student.
- Make connections to the student's strengths, skills, and interests as part of the transition.
- Visit new environments before the transition if possible.

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Design learning for all](#)

Suggestion: [Create structure and routine](#)

Date

05 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/create-structure-and-routine

Build in predictable flexibility and novelty

Routines are very valuable to many learners but some learners love novelty rather than routine, and there are some days when things just do not work as planned. To cater for all learners, plan for flexibility and novelty.

For example:

- Offer a “you choose” slot on the timetable. Take care to support those who need help choosing, for example offer a choice dice.
- Offer a “wait and see” slot on the timetable.
- Design and practise activities for when everyone needs a change. For example, calming activities, movement breaks, story readings or circle time.
- Change one small part of a larger routine. For example, have a different puppet visit at mat time or have an unusual visual to inspire students.
- Design routines that have different ways of thinking or doing things for different times. For example, a focus on discussions one day a week, visuals the next day and thinking routines the day after that.

This information was downloaded/printed from the Ministry of Education's website "Inclusive Education". Except where otherwise noted it is Crown Copyright 2018.

Information on the Inclusive Education website is regularly updated so we recommend you check the website version of this information to ensure it remains current.