

Changes to cognition and thinking processes

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Understand impacts on learning and wellbeing' from the Guide: [Acquired brain injury and learning](#)

-
- Includes:**
- Challenges and frustrations
 - Multiple effects on learning
 - Needing more time
 - Effects may present later
 - Summary
 - Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Understand impacts on learning and wellbeing](#)

Suggestion: [Changes to cognition and thinking processes](#)

Date

08 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/changes-to-cognition-and-thinking-processes

Challenges and frustrations

Young people with brain injuries explain their difficulties and frustrations.

- I study for twice as long as I used to, but I'm doing much worse.
- I can't remember anything I read no matter how many times I re-read the same thing.
- I study hard and feel like I know the material. Then I go into the test and can't come up with the answers.
- Essay exams are murder. I need 20 minutes to think of what I want to say and then the time has run out.
- I get so tired I can barely get through the school day. At night, I'm just too tired to do my homework.
- I'm so distracted. I can pay attention for five minutes and then my mind wanders.
- I go to every class, but nothing sinks in.

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Multiple effects on learning

Each brain injury can cause a range of interconnected difficulties related to thinking and processing information.

Research shows that brain injury often harms basic cognitive abilities such as memory, learning, attention and concentration, word finding, and visual perception.

Injury can also harm important academic abilities such as reading, arithmetic reasoning, vocabulary, writing, and spelling.

Source:

[Accommodations guide for students with brain injury](https://www.brainline.org/article/accommodations-guide-students-brain-injury)
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Needing more time



Source:

[ACC New Zealand](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsA6EAhqJAb4-WCwOFMj4gg>

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Effects may present later

A characteristic of ABIs is that the effects can be latent.

While most people are symptom-free within two weeks, some can experience problems for months or even years after a minor head injury.

Headway - the brain injury association

Source:

[Effects of brain injury](#)

<https://www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/effects-of-brain-injury/>

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Summary

Brain injury may affect a child or young person's ability to learn.

Areas affected can include:

- ✓ memory
- ✓ attention and concentration
- ✓ speed of thinking
- ✓ problem solving
- ✓ comprehension
- ✓ organisation and planning skills
- ✓ visual and/or auditory processing skills.

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Useful resources



Brain Injury in Children

This site offers key points about how to manage brain injury in children and what to look for.

Publisher: KidsHealth

[Visit website](#)

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