

# Support communication using recommended approaches

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Key areas to support' from the Guide: [Deaf and hard of hearing](#)

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## **Includes:**

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Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Deaf or hard of hearing students and learning](#)

Strategy: [Key areas to support](#)

Suggestion: [Support communication using recommended approaches](#)

Date

04 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/deaf-or-hard-of-hearing-students-and-learning/support-communication-using-recommended-approaches](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/deaf-or-hard-of-hearing-students-and-learning/support-communication-using-recommended-approaches)

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## Tips from students

Students provide five tips to support communication in the classroom.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/BvutvFjROZc>

Closed Captions

**Source:**

[Biomation Productions C.I.C. \(UK\)](#)  
<https://youtu.be/BvutvFjROZc>

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# Support understanding

Communication (including speech and language) is essential to sharing and making sense of knowledge and information.

Support communication using a range of communication modes:

- text
- speech
- movement
- illustration
- storyboards
- video and online tools.

Ensure that all students understand the task before they start working. Breaking the task into manageable chunks can support understanding.

It is important to note that **language delay may not reflect a student's cognitive skills or ability to learn.**

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# Give clear and concise instructions

Deaf students and those who are hard of hearing benefit from all the visual cues they can get in order to help follow what is being said.

- ✓ All teachers could benefit from learning some sign language.
- ✓ Use a range of visual learning materials such as handouts, YouTube clips, pictures, posters, and diagrams that include titles and keywords.
- ✓ Make eye contact with students to increase connection. Look at students when speaking.
- ✓ Rephrase, but don't repeat. Some words can be more difficult to lip-read than others.
- ✓ Display instructions and information such as new vocabulary as the lesson progresses.
- ✓ Speak a little slower and group words into phrases.
- ✓ Be aware of situations when the student will not be able to lip-read and prepare beforehand. For example, if using a slide show or video with the lights out, consider using a captioned video, providing a transcript, or seating the student next to someone able to take notes. Also use the learner's FM system.

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## Organisational tips for teachers

Ideas for optimal classroom arrangement and ways to frame information to aid deaf students' understanding.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/EBViorlLYW4>

No captions or transcript

**Source:**

[Learn NC \(US\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBViorlLYW4>

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# Optimise the physical environment

Suggestions to support communication through classroom organisation.

- ✓ Offer the student a place near the front of the room with good visual access to the teacher, and at the side where they can see the majority of students' faces.
- ✓ During group activities, encourage the student to watch the faces of the other students when they speak and sit in a semi-circle.
- ✓ Sit students away from air conditioners, open doors or windows or other high-noise areas.
- ✓ Provide a seat where the student is facing away from a light source. It is difficult to speech read or see other visual cues when looking into the light.
- ✓ Invite the student to video those giving class presentations, so they can zoom in to the speaker's face.
- ✓ Use a sound field system.
- ✓ Lip reading requires intense concentration and can be tiring. Organise your classroom programme to provide relief from this intensity.

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## Useful resources



## New Zealand Sign Language dictionary

A multimedia, multilingual reference tool. You can search by: English/Māori word, visual features of the sign and more.

Publisher: New Zealand Sign Language

[Visit website](#)



## NZSL dictionary app on iTunes store

The New Zealand Sign Language dictionary is available as a free app for iOS devices.

Publisher: Deaf Studies Research Unit, Victoria University of

[Visit website](#)



## NZSL dictionary app on Google Play store

The New Zealand Sign Language dictionary is available as a free app for android devices.

Publisher: Deaf Studies Research Unit, Victoria University of

[Visit website](#)



## Thumbs Up – An introduction to New Zealand Sign Language

Resource for teaching and learning NZSL as an additional language in years 7–8, at curriculum levels 1 and 2, in English-medium schools.

[Visit website](#)

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