

Ask the learner what will help

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Identify needs and how to provide support'
from the Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

Includes:

- Ask what helps
- Innovate with getting to know your learner
- Let ākonga personalise learner profiles
- What to include in a learner profile
- Useful resources
- Examples of learner profiles

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

Strategy: [Identify needs and how to provide support](#)

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Date

14 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/down-syndrome-and-learning/ask-the-student-what-will-help-and-consider-a-learner-profile

Ask what helps

Katrina, a high school student from Onslow College makes recommendations about ways teachers can support her learning.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/100662365>

Closed Captions

Source:

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

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

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Innovate with getting to know your learner

Learner profiles can help school staff build relationships with ākongā and their whānau, understand their perspectives and design learning to meet learner needs. There are many creative and innovative ways to build knowledge about your learner.

Creative alternatives to learner profiles:

1. All About Me Interviews

- One-on-one chats with a teacher or peer using simple, structured questions.
- Use visuals or yes/no prompts.
- Record answers through voice, video, or drawing:
- "What do you like at school?"
- "What helps you learn?"

2. Video Introductions / Self-Presentations

- Learners record short videos introducing themselves.
- They can show their strengths, interests, and needs.
- Great for visual and verbal expression — use prompts or interview formats.

3. Photo Collages or Vision Boards

- Learners select photos of people, places, things, or activities they like.
- Use magazines, printed photos, or digital tools (like Canva or Book Creator).
- Add labels or short captions if appropriate.

4. Learning Choice Baskets

- Use a basket or box filled with objects that represent learning preferences (e.g., headphones, timer, picture of a friend, fidget, iPad).
- The learner selects what helps them learn best.
- You can record their choices as a profile.

5. Interactive Poster or Wall Display

Create a classroom wall or board where learners can add post-its or pictures under categories:

"I feel calm when..."

"I like learning with..."

"I want to get better at..."

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Let ākonga personalise learner profiles



Source:

[Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga](#)

[https://inclusive-live-storagestack-assetstorages3bucket-3uty0hejzw6u.s3.ap-southeast-](https://inclusive-live-storagestack-assetstorages3bucket-3uty0hejzw6u.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/public/inclusive-education/resources/files/Example%2BLearner%2BProfile-Rachel.pdf)

[2.amazonaws.com/public/inclusive-education/resources/files/Example%2BLearner%2BProfile-Rachel.pdf](https://inclusive-live-storagestack-assetstorages3bucket-3uty0hejzw6u.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/public/inclusive-education/resources/files/Example%2BLearner%2BProfile-Rachel.pdf)

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What to include in a learner profile

Discuss with ākongā and their whānau what information will help inform their learning.

- ✓ Important people
- ✓ Cultural connections and experiences
- ✓ Languages spoken
- ✓ Things the student is good at
- ✓ Memorable life experiences
- ✓ How they like to unwind and relax
- ✓ Likes and interests
- ✓ Dislikes and things they avoid
- ✓ How they like to learn and what helps
- ✓ Things that make it hard for them to learn
- ✓ What they do when they need help.

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Useful resources



Learning Maps

Learning maps are another practical approach for Kaiako and parents to support learners in fun and energising ways that will help to improve their learning.

Publisher: Infinity Learn Limited

[Visit website](#)



PATH Planning Process

This site provides in-depth information about the process of PATH planning from a person-centred, kotahitanga approach.

Publisher: Inclusive Solutions

[Visit website](#)



ThingLink

Allows learners to embed hotspots with text, audio, quizzes, and links onto images or videos—great for presenting their learning visually and interactively.

Publisher: ThingLink

[Visit website](#)



Avatoon – Cartoon avatar maker

Students can create personalised avatars that reflect their identity, style, and expressions—perfect for easy self-representation in digital profiles or presentations.

Publisher: Avatoon

[Visit website](#)

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Examples of learner profiles



Primary school learner profile

An example of a NZ primary school student's learner profile, developed by the adults around her.

[Download](#) DOC (613 KB)



Secondary school learner profile

An example of a NZ secondary student's learner profile.

[Download](#) PDF (331 KB)

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