

Partner with whānau, parents and caregivers

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

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- Includes:**
- Take the initiative to make contact
 - What to ask
 - Support information sharing
 - Discuss health conditions
 - Useful resources

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From

Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

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

Suggestion: [Partner with whānau, parents and caregivers](#)

Date

19 February 2025

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/down-syndrome-and-learning/partner-with-whanau-parents-and-caregivers

Take the initiative to make contact

Prioritise connecting with whānau so they can share their insights and expertise.

The first thing I do is spend some time getting to know them personally and what works for them having communication with their parents, making those phone calls, having those meetings.

Also having discussions with other teachers who have taught them in the past. Getting information about what works for them.

Brooke Houghton, Onslow College

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What to ask

Connect with parents, whānau, and caregivers to understand the strengths and needs of students.

Practical elements:

- the language(s) spoken at home
- medications and allergies
- equipment used at home
- what they do at home to support learning

Students' likes and dislikes:

- likes, interests, strengths, what they're good at, can do independently
- dislikes, what can upset them, how they express this, calming skills
- favourites (TV programmes, hobbies, books, songs, sports)

The people in the students' lives:

- parent and whānau hopes and priorities
- important people in the student's life
- best methods and times to communicate with the family
- professionals working with the family
- questions they have and support they would like from the school.

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Support information sharing

Build regular times for communication

- ✓ Encourage parents and caregivers to share what they have noticed or assessments they have had done outside school.
- ✓ Build on any programmes or materials used at home, to maximise consistency and support for the student.
- ✓ Develop systems for passing on information about a student's needs, progress and next steps.
- ✓ Share information about out-of-school programmes that may help boost the student's self-esteem, for example, classes or groups for music, art, dance or sports.

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Discuss health conditions

Many students with Down syndrome have associated health conditions.

Discuss with parents and whānau:

- ✓ the implications of any specific health conditions affecting the heart, respiratory system, eyesight or hearing
- ✓ your role in helping the student to stay active, healthy, and well rested
- ✓ whether the student needs a rest on days following a night of broken or too little sleep.

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Useful resources



Family/whānau file

A booklet to help parents of students with additional needs to brief their child's school.

[Visit website](#)

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