

# Support participation and build confidence

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Helpful classroom strategies years 1-8' from the Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

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- Includes:**
- Encourage sustained participation
  - Chunk tasks and time to increase motivation
  - Use social stories to support social skills
  - Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

Strategy: [Helpful classroom strategies years 1-8](#)

Suggestion: [Support participation and build confidence](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/down-syndrome-and-learning/support-participation-and-build-confidence-2](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/down-syndrome-and-learning/support-participation-and-build-confidence-2)

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## Encourage sustained participation

Discuss with students what will support their participation and motivation.

Build these suggestions into your teaching practice.

- ✓ Establish clear classroom routines.
- ✓ Teach strategies to help ākongā when they get stuck.
- ✓ Break work into short manageable chunks.
- ✓ Give positive, timely feedback.
- ✓ Brief students about changes to routine.
- ✓ When changing classroom layout, provide a plan of new layout and when it will happen.
- ✓ Provide easy access to quiet spaces for working or winding down.
- ✓ Schedule brain breaks.
- ✓ Notice avoidance tactics or increasing anxiety, implement supports quickly.
- ✓ Offer leadership opportunities based on knowledge of student's expertise and interests.
- ✓ Connect learning to student's interests.
- ✓ Foster tuakana-teina relationships where students support each other.

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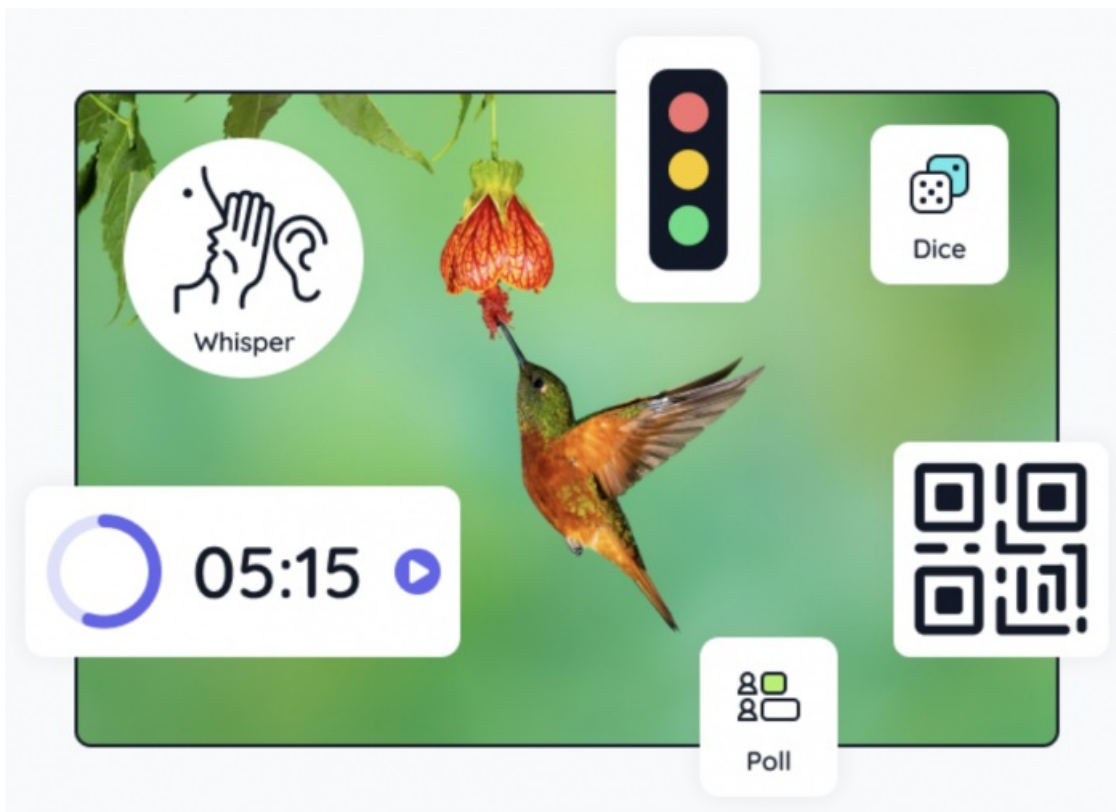
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## Chunk tasks and time to increase motivation



Source:

[Classroomscreen](#)

<https://classroomscreen.com/>

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## Use social stories to support social skills

Social Stories™, comic strip conversations, and social scripts are strategies to support a students' language skills and social interactions.

Recommended approach:

- target a single behaviour
- the target behaviour is concrete (e.g. simple positive behaviours or communication goals rather than subtle or complex social skills)
- matched to the student's language and cognitive skills
- used in every day settings
- presented on multiple occasions.

The National Autistic Society UK website provides a fuller description of [social stories and comic strip conversations](#) .

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## Useful resources



### Positive steps for social inclusion

Read time: 8 min

A guide to supporting social inclusion.

Publisher: National Down Syndrome Society

[Visit website](#)



### Managing behaviours

Read time: 8 min

Practical advice for teachers and support staff.

Publisher: National Down Syndrome Society

[Visit website](#)



### Strategies for supporting attention, activities, emotions and behaviour.

This resource offers clear strategies to strengthen focus at home and school.

Publisher: National Down Syndrome Society

[Visit website](#)

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