

Support processing and organisation skills

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

Includes:

- Support organisation with visuals
- Support concept development
- Support attention, focus and independence
- Model planning and thinking
- Support thinking and pattern recognition
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

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

Suggestion: [Support processing and organisation skills](#)

Date

16 September 2025

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Support organisation with visuals



Source:

Kathy Cassidy

<https://flic.kr/p/aH3vZV>

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Support concept development

Build new learning on solid foundations.

Provide multiple opportunities to revisit a new idea or concept.

- ✓ Check to ensure that learners retain and can demonstrate previously-learned skills before beginning new learning.
- ✓ Teach new skills using a variety of methods, materials and contexts and using concrete, practical and visual materials.
- ✓ Reinforce abstract concepts with visual and concrete materials.
- ✓ Make explicit connections between new knowledge and previous experience.
- ✓ Make connections to high interest and practical everyday situations.
- ✓ Offer multi-sensory explanations and demonstrations.
- ✓ Provide extra time and opportunities for additional repetition and reinforcement – where applicable, involve a buddy, parents, or a support teacher.

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Support attention, focus and independence

Aim to increase student independence by providing just enough support. Build these approaches into the way you teach.

- ✓ Break learning into short, focused and clearly defined tasks.
- ✓ Vary the level of demand from task to task.
- ✓ Provide clear instructions that are visually displayed and can be easily returned to.
- ✓ Vary the level of support as necessary and teach buddies how to provide support.
- ✓ Provide a variety of technologies to support learning, for example, an iPad or a computer.
- ✓ Create an activity box for times when the student needs a change of activity or time out.

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Model planning and thinking



Source:

Laurie Sullivan

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/32561453@N05/8711384625/in/photolist-egN89D-egTTVS-egN86c-egN8kp-egTTA1-egN8tv-egN8ja-egTTPG-egTTXN-egN88e-egTTUC-egN8eX-egTTyj-egTTHQ-egN8di>

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Support thinking and pattern recognition

Use tools and approaches to help learners to recognise patterns, critical features, big ideas and relationships.

- ✓ Use visuals — graphics, photos, cartoons, pictures — to support text and talk when explaining anything.
- ✓ Offer 3D virtual and physical models and real objects to help ākonga identify critical features.
- ✓ Use mind maps, flowcharts, and outlines to help learners unpack big ideas and relationships.
- ✓ Give ākonga multiple opportunities to engage with new ideas and concepts.
- ✓ Provide extra time for ākonga to think and process before they need to respond in a discussion.
- ✓ Use mindmaps to brainstorm ideas.
- ✓ Support group and class discussions with visual annotations to prompt later recall of key ideas.
- ✓ Make thinking tools and approaches available across all curriculum areas.

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Useful resources



Popplet

Popplet is a tool for the iPad and web to capture and organise ideas.

Publisher: Popplet

[Visit website](#)



MindMup

A free online mind-mapping tool. Great for organising thoughts, brainstorming, and visual planning.

Publisher: MindMup

[Visit website](#)

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