

Build whanaungatanga

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

Includes:

Partner with whānau

Use Ngā heke pūtahi

Build trust

Build the learner profile over time

Support self-advocacy with learner profiles

Find approaches that work at school and at home

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and learning](#)

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

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Date

11 June 2026

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inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-and-learning/build-whanaungatanga

Partner with whānau

Families are experts when it comes to their own children – they live with them 24 hours a day, seven days a week.... [and] see different needs than those evident in a classroom.

Educators and parents must work together and learn from each other to develop consistent and comprehensive support for students with FASD.

Source:

[Making a difference: Working with students who have fetal alcohol spectrum disorders](#)

<https://www.fasdoutreach.ca/resources/all/m/making-a-difference-working-with-students-who-have-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorders>

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Use Ngā heke pūtahi

Ngā heke pūtahi is a Māori neuro-informed approach to caring for ākonga and their whānau affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Use it to build a holistic learner profile to support ākonga wellbeing and learning.

The **Understand** section of this guide has information on the origin of Ngā heke pūtahi.

- Pūtake (purpose): Understanding the source of the issue. Gathering information on strengths and challenges.
- Ūkaipō (home, homeland): The source of sustenance, love and strength.
- Tipu tonu ake (continued growth and development). A lifelong focus and intervening early.
- Aronga (focus): Understanding and responding to FASD impacts on learning.
- Hononga (connection): Developing strong and clear relationships across systems of care.
- Ihi (essential force): Supporting tamariki development through te ao Māori, using strengths, connections and artistry.

Source: [Te Whare o Oro – Te Atawhai o Te Ao](#) (scroll to bottom of the page).

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Build trust

Kaiako talk about the importance of getting to know ākongā Māori and building trust to enable learning.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/113877188>

[View transcript](#)

Source:

[Te Mangōroa \(NZ\)](#)

<https://temangoroa.tki.org.nz/Video-stories/TMK-Building-trust-setting-expectation>

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Build the learner profile over time

Learner profiles can help school staff build relationships with ākonga and their whānau, understand their perspectives and design learning to meet student needs.

Considerations for learner profiles.

- Provide multiple opportunities and methods to develop the profile.
- Prioritise information from students by using effective communication techniques, for example, point to select, or communication boards.
- Revisit the profile on a regular basis to add depth and new insights.
- Use a range of input methods such as conversations, observations, formal reviews and regular surveys.
- Encourage students to understand their needs and preferences as a learner.
- Act on information that is shared so students can see how their voice helps you design learning experiences that work for them.

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Support self-advocacy with learner profiles

Create opportunities where students can tell you what supports their learning and what gets in the way.

Having students create a learner profile for themselves is a great way to have them develop a better and fuller understanding of who they are as learners...

This develops their independence and places them in a better position to self-advocate for the tools, learning materials, and presentation options that can optimise their learning experiences.

Naryn Searcy

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Find approaches that work at school and at home

Share approaches that are successful at home or at school to build continuity, strengthen engagement and facilitate learning.

Approaches or items that could be shared or aligned across home and school include:

- home routines that support the student
- home supports for day-to-day life
- student interests, such as favourite topics, colours, sports and music
- phrases, visual cues, signs and other communication techniques
- visuals that support understanding
- strategies and solutions for specific issues
- objects and items that are meaningful and offer support for their children
- calming strategies, for example, objects, cushions, dark spaces and headphones
- eating and personal routines
- furniture and physical supports, for example, chairs and table heights.

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