

# Create structure in a flexible environment

A suggestion for implementing the strategy  
'Helpful classroom strategies years 9–13' from  
the Guide: [FASD and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Walk in your student's shoes
- Create structure in a flexible space
- Minimise distractions
- Build routines
- Agree guidelines for behaviour
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

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

Strategy: [Helpful classroom strategies years 9–13](#)

Suggestion: [Create structure in a flexible environment](#)

Date

08 May 2024

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-and-learning/create-structure-in-a-flexible-environment](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-and-learning/create-structure-in-a-flexible-environment)

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## Walk in your student's shoes

Take a walk around the classroom. Use all your senses to consider how the classroom might look, sound, and feel to your student.

Consider:

- ✓ routines and ways of working
- ✓ how you will make timing of assignments and assessment tasks manageable
- ✓ the practical challenges for students, such as timetabling, and managing their time
- ✓ how the student will find and access resources
- ✓ how the classroom is laid out
- ✓ where to create a quiet place for students to work
- ✓ where your student can go if they need to calm down, and what your student needs for a calming space.

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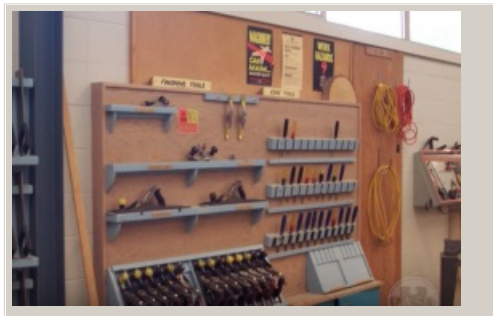
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## Create structure in a flexible space

Set up your environment to minimise students' cognitive load.

Providing support for students' specific needs enables them to work more independently.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/AJqaNNkqxCY>

Closed Captions

Source:

[POPFASD \(Canada\)](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWRoE1YnO371Fc\\_hWx6Pnhg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWRoE1YnO371Fc_hWx6Pnhg)

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## Minimise distractions

Minimise auditory and visual distractions to help diminish the confusion and frustration some students experience, and maximise their ability to focus on the task at hand.

### Reduce visual distractions

- Strategically place the student's seat away from distractions, such as doorways and windows.
- Clear the student's desk of everything, except the lesson at hand.
- Put away (or out of view) teacher's equipment and books competing for a student's attention.

### Reduce auditory distractions

- Seat student closest to where you present information.
- Seat student next to students who do not distract others.
- Provide nonverbal cues that are familiar to the student to help them stay focused and working quietly, for example: use hand signals, move close to student.
- Create quiet spots in your classroom.

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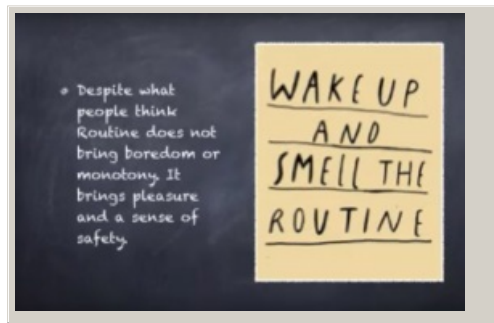
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## Build routines

Consistent routines reduce stress and anxiety for students.

Develop simple routines, which are used daily to support successful learning and transitions with the students.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/qpbLnTvs2EQ>

No captions or transcript

Source:

[WRaP Schools \(Canada\)](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChuAycUoRt\\_HkcdbXnKiV\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChuAycUoRt_HkcdbXnKiV_Q)

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## Agree guidelines for behaviour

Develop a class  
treaty/norms/rules with  
the students.

- ✓ Agree on clear, concrete rules that are the same across all classes.
- ✓ Display the rules in the classrooms.
- ✓ Use picture cues.
- ✓ Review the rules with students regularly.
- ✓ Role-play classroom rules.
- ✓ Use consistent vocabulary when teaching and reinforcing rules across all classes.
- ✓ Be consistent when applying the rules.
- ✓ Apply agreed consequences immediately when a rule is broken.

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## Useful resources



### Environment: For learners with FASD and other complex learning needs

A checklist for setting up a classroom environment that considers routines and structure, and reduces sensory overload.

Publisher: POPFASD

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