

# Create structure in a flexible environment

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

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## **Includes:**

- Establish routines
- Provide a predictable environment
- Create responsive classroom layouts
- Create structure in a flexible space
- Minimise distractions
- Provide structure and consistent routines

Inclusive Education

From

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

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

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

Date

01 July 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-and-learning/y1-8-create-structure-in-a-flexible-environment](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-and-learning/y1-8-create-structure-in-a-flexible-environment)

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## Establish routines

Wherever possible, build predictability into your classroom.

Support routines and spoken instructions with visuals.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/100662378>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education, inclusive education videos \(NZ\)](#)

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## Provide a predictable environment

Create predictable routines to reduce anxiety and allow students to manage themselves independently.

- ✓ Use personalised and class timetables
- ✓ Clarify expectations and teach appropriate behaviours
- ✓ Signal upcoming transitions
- ✓ Talk through last minute changes that may be startling to students
- ✓ Use task boards to break large tasks into components
- ✓ Develop strategies for times of anxiety
- ✓ Share key information across the school for example with staff, leaders and relief teachers

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# Create responsive classroom layouts

Parents and whānau know their tamariki and can pre-empt situations that could cause distress.

This video shows examples of how teaching teams can respond and plan specific support for tamariki.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/159138467>

Closed Captions

Source:

Ministry of Education, [inclusive education videos \(NZ\)](#)  
<https://vimeo.com/album/2950799>

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# Create structure in a flexible space

Set up your environment to enable students to work more independently by minimising cognitive load.

For more ideas see:

[FASD environment brochure](#) – POPFASD



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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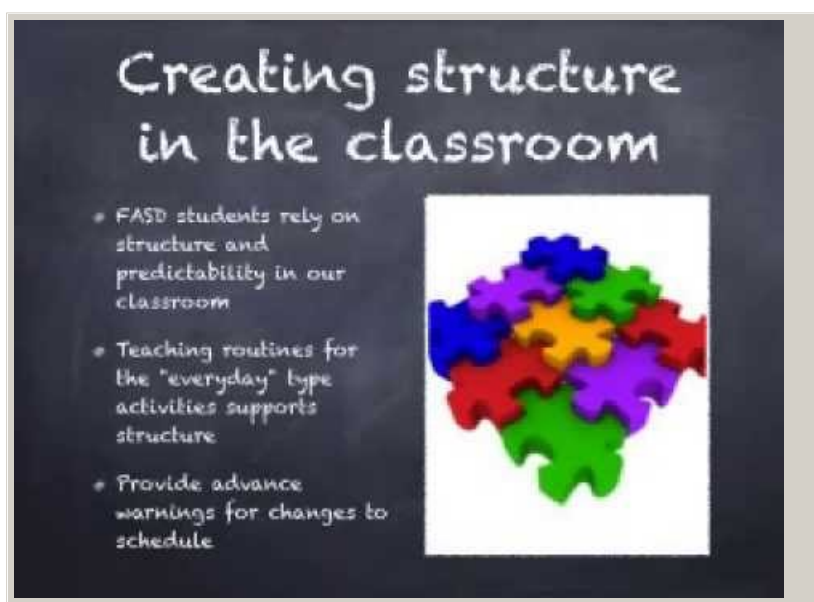
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# Provide structure and consistent routines

Structure helps ease the stress created by constant change.

A consistent routine supports independence and reduces anxiety and stress.



Video hosted on Youtube [http://youtu.be/NR-\\_GTm5MA8](http://youtu.be/NR-_GTm5MA8)

No captions or transcript

Source:

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

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChuAycUoRt\\_HkcbdXnKiV\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChuAycUoRt_HkcbdXnKiV_Q)

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