

Create structure in a flexible environment

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

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

11 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-and-learning/y1-8-create-structure-in-a-flexible-environment

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

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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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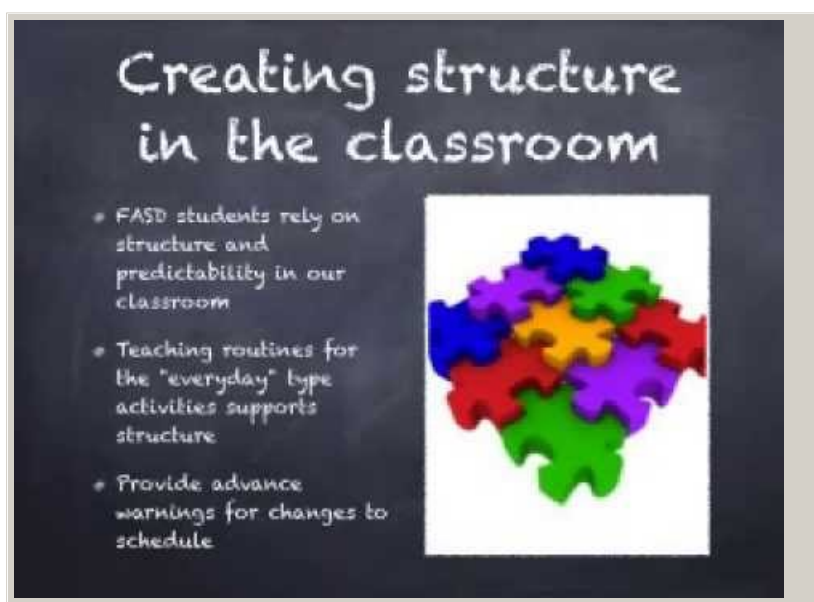
Link

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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

No captions or transcript

Source:

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

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChuAycUoRt_HkcbdXnKiV_Q

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