

# Recognise needs and intervene early

A suggestion for implementing the strategy  
'Identify needs and how to provide support'  
from the Guide: [Speech, Language and Communication](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Provide timely support
- Notice the signs of language needs
- Use oral language development steps
- Use culturally appropriate measures to identify needs
- Base new learning on current strengths
- Identify support needs

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Speech, Language and Communication](#)

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

Suggestion: [Recognise needs and intervene early](#)

Date

05 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/speech-language-and-communication/recognise-needs-and-intervene-early](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/speech-language-and-communication/recognise-needs-and-intervene-early)

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## Provide timely support

Seek and provide timely support as soon as you identify speech, language or communication needs.

Kaiako actions:

- notice and identify needs
- partner with ākonga and whānau
- gather information
- record observations
- check your thinking with your peers and in-school specialists such as SENCo
- design and adapt classroom environments to maximise success and learning
- implement classroom strategies to support ākonga.

When appropriate:

- seek additional school-based support
- ask for additional Learning Support, for example, for speech-language therapy.

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## Notice the signs of language needs



Source:

[Raise Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder \(RADLD\)](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAsf\\_Wqjz4g&list=PLZKYMAk9g2plvvpBnHmk89QHU1-yT4Xh5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAsf_Wqjz4g&list=PLZKYMAk9g2plvvpBnHmk89QHU1-yT4Xh5)

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## Use oral language development steps



He potuama mō te reo ā-waha  
**Stepping stones in oral language**

Source:

Adapted from Ministry of Education, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

<https://tewhariki.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/he-poutama-m-te-reo--waha-stepping-stones-in-oral-language/5637169380.p>

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## Use culturally appropriate measures to identify needs

“Bilingual individuals are vulnerable to misdiagnosis where diversity is mistaken for disorder.”

Source: [RCSLT UK](#)

To give an accurate picture of student abilities assessments and observations should be linguistically and culturally appropriate. Māori, Pacific, linguistically diverse or bilingual students may be misdiagnosed using traditional English language assessment tools.

For more information see MAI Journal 2020: Volume 9 Issue 3:

[The experiences of whānau and kaiako with speech-language therapy in kaupapa Māori education](#)

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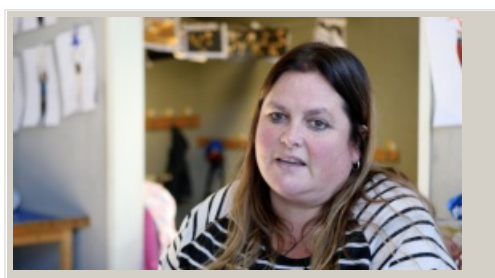
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## Base new learning on current strengths

Staff talk about getting to know students and finding out about their current speech, language and communication skills to determine their next learning steps.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/368156633>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga](#)

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7285341/video/368156633>

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# Identify support needs

Support may include extra in-class support from kaiako, more in-depth school interventions, or a request for support from a Ministry of Education speech-language therapist.

Ākonga may benefit from additional support where the family, whānau or educators are concerned that:

- the child's talking is very hard to understand.
- the child's language skills are below the levels expected for their age.
- the child finds it hard to follow verbal instructions.
- the child speaks more than one language and has difficulties across all the languages they speak.
- the child has difficulty developing social skills.
- the child has a stutter.
- the child has a problem with their voice that makes it hard for them to talk.
- the child has difficulty participating in conversations.

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