

# Support students in the playground

A suggestion for implementing the strategy  
'Support and strengthen peer relationships'  
from the Guide: [Positive peer relationships](#)

- 
- Includes:**
- Support recreational activities
  - Support unstructured time
  - Create quiet spaces
  - Develop buddy systems
  - Build confidence
  - Consider the environment
  - Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting positive peer relationships](#)

Strategy: [Support and strengthen peer relationships](#)

Suggestion: [Support students in the playground](#)

Date

08 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-positive-peer-relationships/support-students-in-the-playground](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-positive-peer-relationships/support-students-in-the-playground)

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## Support recreational activities



Source:

[cobalt123](#)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/cobalt/485155687/sizes/o/>

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# Support unstructured time

Unstructured times, such as lunchtimes, can create stress for some students.

Consider:

- having a small choice of organised activities for students to participate in at break times
- providing buddies to model and mediate (if necessary) interactions during break times
- ensuring that students know where to go to find the duty teacher or peer mediators when they are concerned or need some help
- how to make all staff aware of the support individual students may need and how to provide it most effectively
- outlining the school boundaries and the school rules regularly
- providing alternative break times for junior and senior syndicates in larger schools.

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## Create quiet spaces



Source:

Jane's Pond Ltd

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/janes\\_pond/6306080584/sizes/o/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/janes_pond/6306080584/sizes/o/)

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## Develop buddy systems



Source:

[World Bank Photo Collection](#)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/worldbank/4699806393>

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# Build confidence

Student leaders helped a student with low vision to confidently use playground equipment. (Starts at 1:24)



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/945992215>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education](#)

<https://vimeo.com/945992215>

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# Consider the environment

Work with students to identify adaptations that can be made to enable everyone to participate.

## Sensory integration

Include students with sensitivity to bright light and loud noises by:

- lowering the volume when using music
- using soundproof headphones in the gym or hall
- using sunglasses for outdoor activities in bright sunlight
- turning off some lights and relying more on natural lighting or using LED light bulbs.

## Accessibility

Hard surfaces such as concrete may be dangerous for individuals with dyspraxia, and softer surfaces such as wood chips make it difficult to manoeuvre a wheelchair.

- Use appropriate surface, such as gym or hall, rather than concrete.
- Use outdoor mats.
- Adapt games and activities so all can participate, for example, play a game such as [sitting volleyball](#) or [scooter soccer](#).

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## Useful resources



### Recess for your child with special needs: 7 challenges and solutions

Read time: 6 min

This is a series of suggestions to support students with special needs to participate during playtime and lunchtimes.

Publisher: Friendship Circle Special Needs Resource Blog

[Visit website](#)

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