

# Anticipate, monitor, and plan for responding to child stress

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Support emotional wellbeing and positive mental health' from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

Ensure students are known

Watch for external and internal behaviours

Pay attention to specific needs or sensitivities

Monitor overload

Questions to discuss with students

Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Support emotional wellbeing and positive mental health](#)

Suggestion: [Anticipate, monitor, and plan for responding to child stress](#)

Date

27 April 2024

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/anticipate-monitor-and-plan-for-responding-to-child-stress](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/anticipate-monitor-and-plan-for-responding-to-child-stress)

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## Ensure students are known

Get to know and understand each student and identify potentially difficult times or situations that may be stressful or difficult for them.

Keep up-to-date and maintain an interest in a student's life beyond school.

This will help you to:

- eliminate or minimise situations that may cause unnecessary stress (for example, changes in routine, rushing, illness, sensory overload, turn taking, being reprimanded in front of others, things happening at home)
- identify the student's personal signs of stress or unhappiness and intervene early
- have a timely conversation with a student about what you have noticed and how to develop coping strategies
- more accurately interpret wider classroom/playground behaviour and pre-empt potential areas of conflict.

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## Watch for external and internal behaviours



Source:

[Alexandra Koch](#)

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## Pay attention to specific needs or sensitivities

Make a point of understanding particular stressors for children and young people.

Ask students and their whānau:

- What situations create stress, such as certain types of noise, changes in routines, pain, or discomfort?
- What can you as the teacher do differently to remove or minimise stress points?
- What can we change in the classroom or school environment to reduce stress points?
- How can the student help themselves to return to a calm state if they become stressed?

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## Monitor overload

Students experience cognitive stress and overload when a task or situation is overwhelming.

As cognitive fatigue accumulates through the day/week, it may impact self control and heighten sensitivities.

- ✓ Regularly connect with the student and parents/whānau to discuss their workload and what is happening at home.
- ✓ Work with the student and their family to prevent overload. (For example, negotiate in advance the expectations around completing tasks.)
- ✓ Find out what the signs of the student being overloaded are.
- ✓ Find out what triggers overload for the student.
- ✓ Discuss with the student what support they need to self-manage when they are overloaded. For example, use a break card, withdraw to a quiet space, tell the teacher they are overloaded.

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## Questions to discuss with students

Discuss and agree as a class.

How can we communicate if something is too hard?

How can we ask for help?

How can we look after our friends and recognise when they are stressed?

Where we can go if we are stressed?

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## Useful resources



### The incredible 5-point scale

Overview of the Incredible 5-point scale, including examples and a blank template.

Publisher: Kari Dunn Buron

[Visit website](#)



### He māpuna te tamaiti: Supporting social and emotional competence in early learning

Read time: 160 min

This resource has been written for kaiako in Aotearoa New Zealand early learning services. Its purpose is to support you to understand and draw on effective practices that enhance children's social and emotional competence, engagement, and learning.

Publisher: Te Whāriki Online

[Visit website](#)

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