



Classroom Strategies for Supporting Students with Special Needs Because every student deserves to feel seen, supported, and capable

Universal Strategies That Help Everyone

- Visual schedules to reduce anxiety and increase predictability
- Clear, consistent routines with gentle transitions
- Chunking tasks into smaller, manageable steps
- Multi-sensory instruction (visual, auditory, tactile)
- Flexible seating options (floor cushions, wobble stools, quiet corners)
- Positive reinforcement focused on effort and progress
- Choice boards to support autonomy and engagement

Communication Supports

- Use visual aids, gestures, and simplified language
- Offer AAC tools (communication boards, devices, cards)
- Provide wait time after asking questions
- Use “first/then” prompts to guide transitions
- Validate all forms of communication—verbal, nonverbal, behavioral

Sensory-Friendly Adjustments

- Create a calm-down corner with soft lighting and fidgets
- Offer noise-canceling headphones or quiet zones
- Allow movement breaks or sensory walks
- Use texture-friendly materials for art and writing
- Respect sensory boundaries (touch, sound, smell)

Emotional & Behavioral Supports

- Use emotion check-ins or mood meters
- Practice co-regulation before correction
- Offer predictable consequences with empathy
- Use social stories to teach expectations

- Celebrate small wins and self-advocacy moments

 Printable Ideas to Pair With This Guide

- "Classroom Calm Corner Setup" checklist
- "Student Strengths & Supports" profile sheet
- "Visual Schedule Template"
- "Emotion Check-In Cards"
- "Sensory Break Menu" scroll
- "First/Then Board" printable

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