



Effective Classroom Strategies for Students with Disabilities

Strategy 1: Setting Up Your Classroom for Success



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

Environmental Supports

Arrival Routine

Visual or
Physical
Boundaries

Timers

Schedules

Reinforcement

Calming
Supports

Arrival Routine

Explicitly teach all procedures and expectations

Use visual supports to break down individual parts of the routine



Set up a structured and supported arrival routine from the first day of school

Use color coded strategies for students for an additional level of support



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Schedules

Set up a visual or written schedule for the classroom

Use a first/then board for activities to help students predict what is coming next

Create a portable checklist schedule for older students



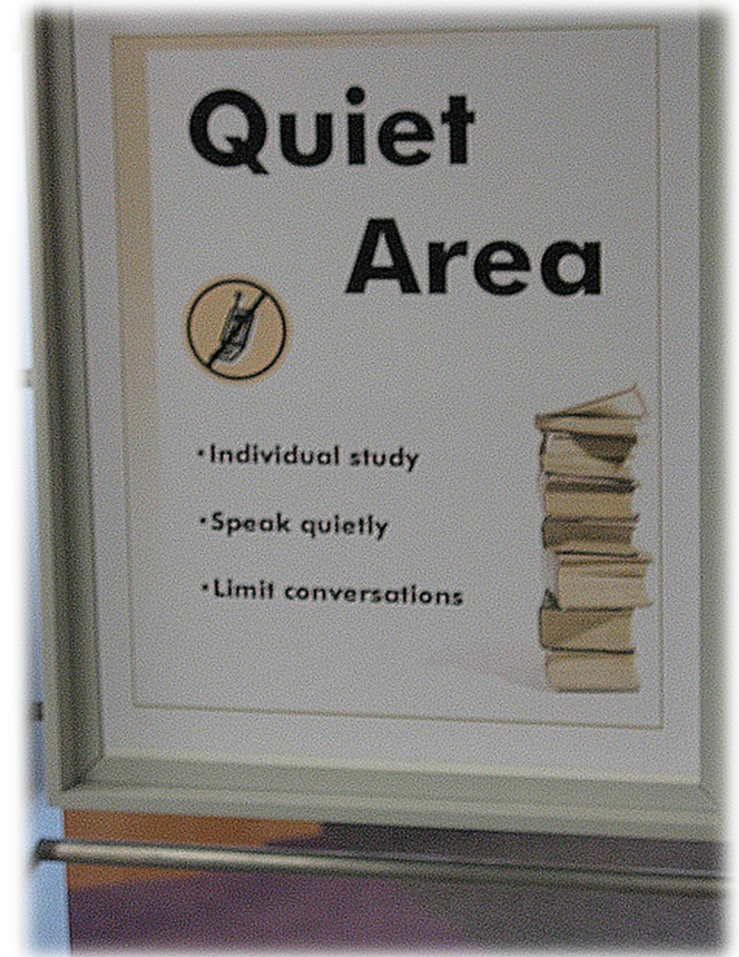
Visual or Physical Boundaries

Clearly defined spaces using shelving, rugs or tables

Visual boundaries on carpet, near teacher spaces or to define a student's workspace

“Stop” signs on doors

Cues to help with material organization



Classroom Timers



Show students how much time is left to complete work



Display the length of time until the next activity



Can support the management of difficult transitions during highly reinforcing activities

Calming Supports



Allow access for all students

Pre-teach expectations for use

Consider a portable calm-down strategy kit

Plan for Reinforcement

Have strong structures and routines from the first day of school.

Begin with a high rate of reinforcement

Develop a whole class/group reinforcement system

Build stamina and endurance for challenging work tasks

Use student IEPs to create individual reinforcement systems as needed

Additional Resources

- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations \(challengingbehavior.org\)](https://challengingbehavior.org)
- ["Positive, Proactive Approaches to Supporting Children with Disabilities: A Guide for Stakeholders"](#)
- [Evidence-Based Practices for Improving Challenging Behaviors of Students with Severe Disabilities](#)
- [IRIS | Create a Structured Classroom \(vanderbilt.edu\)](https://iris.vanderbilt.edu)

Contact Information

Rebecca Turner

Education Program Consultant

Division of IDEA Implementation and Preschool

502-564-4970, extension 4164

Rebecca.Turner@education.ky.gov