



Information Paper



The Power of Predictability (for Students)

Why predictability at school matters...



Uncertainty and a lack of predictability increases stress and anxiety. When students cannot anticipate what comes next, their nervous system goes into a state of heightened alert, making it much harder to focus, learn, and manage emotions and behaviour.

Predictability builds **safety** and **trust**, helping students stay **regulated** and **engaged**.

When environments and expectations are **consistent** and **clear**, students are better able to:

Regulate their emotions and behaviours.

Engage with learning and social interactions.

Recover from setbacks and unexpected events.

Build trust with the adults around them.













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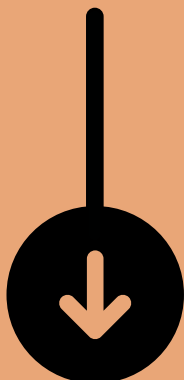
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Predictability increases...



-  Sense of control, choice, and autonomy.
-  Ability to prepare and plan for what is needed.
-  Focus and ability to stay on task.
-  Independence.
-  Confidence to engage.
-  Advocacy.
-  Safety and trust.
-  Ability to cope with challenges.
-  Creativity.
-  Connection.

Predictability decreases...



-  Stress.
-  Unsafe behaviours.
-  Decision fatigue.
-  Anxiety.
-  Cognitive load.

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What does predictability look like for a student?

My school environment is consistent and familiar.

I know what my day or routine will look like.

The adults around me respond in ways I can count on.

I know what will happen if something goes wrong.

The supports I rely on stay in place.



An important distinction...

Change and unexpected events are part of life. Predictability isn't about preventing or eliminating change, it's about having reliable processes for navigating it.

Students need to know:

- **What happens when things change?**
- **What happens when something unexpected occurs?**
- **What happens when I need help or make a mistake?**


Consistent responses to these moments are just as important as a consistent routine.



Scan QR code for more #Safe2BeMe Toolkit resources designed to ensure all students feel safe and supported at school.

Autism Queensland is here to help—get in touch to learn more:

 **Email:** css@autismqld.com.au

 **Phone:** (07) 3273 0000

 **Website:** autismqld.com.au

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