



5-minute read

Classroom-ready

By two clinical psychologists

Empowering Students with 22q: A Primary School Guide for Educators

Part One: The Essentials

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Five minutes to read. Built for the teacher who has thirty other things to do today — this covers what matters most about supporting a child with 22q in the classroom.

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A page for you and your parent to fill in together

Written by clinical psychologists with over 20 years of experience working with children and families affected by 22q. This guide draws on that clinical background and on what parents and teachers tell us actually helps, day to day, in the classroom.



The one idea to hold onto

A child with 22q can look like they are coping when they are not. That is not deception. It is not laziness, and it is rarely about attitude. Most of what looks like behaviour is communication, often from a brain that is working harder than it appears to.

This page is the short version. If you read nothing else, read this.

What you might see	What it might mean	What to try
Withdrawal or shutdown	Cognitive fatigue or sensory overwhelm	Offer a quiet break, reduce verbal demands
Interrupting or calling out	Difficulty with impulse control or working memory	Use visual cues, structured turn-taking
Avoiding tasks	Task feels too complex, or instructions weren't fully processed	Break into single steps, extra scaffolding
Arguing or refusal	Loss of predictability, safety, or autonomy	Offer limited choices, calm prompts
Nodding but not following through	Processing lag — still working through the first instruction	One instruction at a time, wait 30–60 seconds
Quiet, seemingly fine	May be masking difficulty, not actually coping	Check in proactively, don't wait for signs
Speech sounds different or unclear	Differences in palate/speech muscles, not understanding	Don't equate speech clarity with comprehension
Doesn't respond to name or instructions	Possible hearing difference, not inattention	Check hearing before assuming distraction
Slow or reluctant to write	Motor coordination difficulty, not low effort	Reduce handwriting load, allow more time
Sudden distress, no obvious cause	Possible trauma response to a trigger you can't see	Stay calm and predictable, avoid questioning in the moment

“If we rely on outward behaviour, we miss the internal reality. A quiet child is not always a coping child.”



The four things most likely to help

1 Give one instruction at a time, then wait.

The brain may still be processing the first instruction when the second arrives. Ten to sixty seconds of silence after speaking is not wasted time. It is often the difference between a student who follows through and one who does not.

2 Build in predictability.

New, unstructured, or unclear situations cost more energy for a child with 22q than they might for a classmate. A visual timetable, a warning before transitions, a consistent routine, these are small adjustments with a large effect.

3 Watch for fatigue before it is visible.

By the time a child looks tired, they may already be close to empty. Fatigue in 22q is physical, not a matter of motivation. Regular breaks, planned in advance, work better than waiting for the signs.

4 Check in, rather than wait to be asked.

Many children with 22q have learned to look fine. That is often the moment they need the most support. A quiet, regular check that does not require them to ask for help can matter more than almost anything else on this page.

“Some responses that look like defiance or overreaction are a nervous system doing exactly what it learned to do. The trigger isn’t always visible from where you’re standing.”



About you

Every child with 22q is different. This page is for you, parent and teacher, to fill in together, ideally in conversation rather than sitting apart.

Child's name

What you are good at and enjoy

The things you find hardest in the classroom

The things that help

One thing you want your teacher to know

Revisit this together as the year goes on. What helps tends to change as a child grows.

Want to go deeper?

This is the short version. The full Primary School Educator's Guide covers processing, language, fatigue, executive functioning, sensory needs, and trauma sensitivity in much more depth, with the same practical, classroom-ready approach.

Scan to get the full guide



Get the full guide at [22qminded.com](https://www.22qminded.com)