

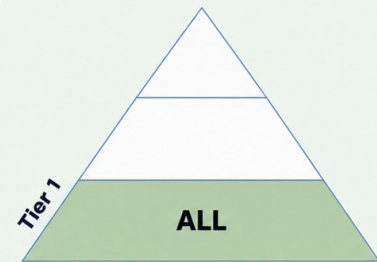
PART 2:

Universal Practices for ALL Students at Tier 1



A Foundation for Every Learner

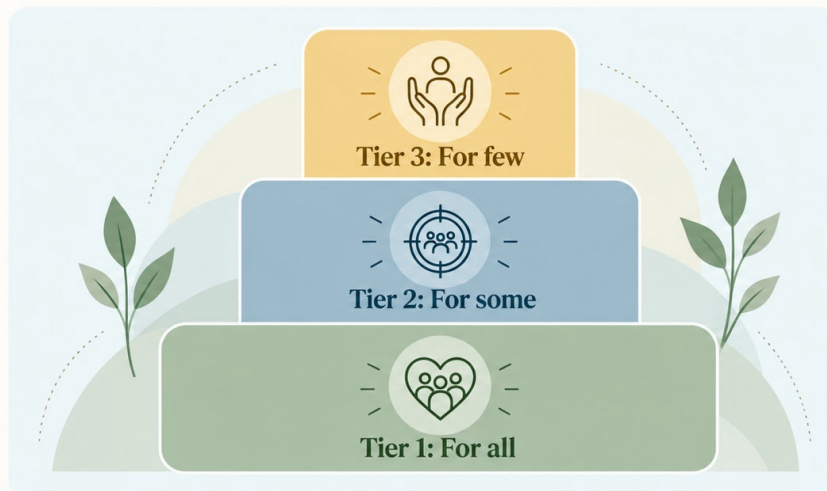
Proactive, consistent practices that create safety, belonging, and the conditions for learning for all students at Tier 1.



1

Support scales with **student needs.**

A MULTI-TIERED APPROACH TO ACCOMPANIMENT



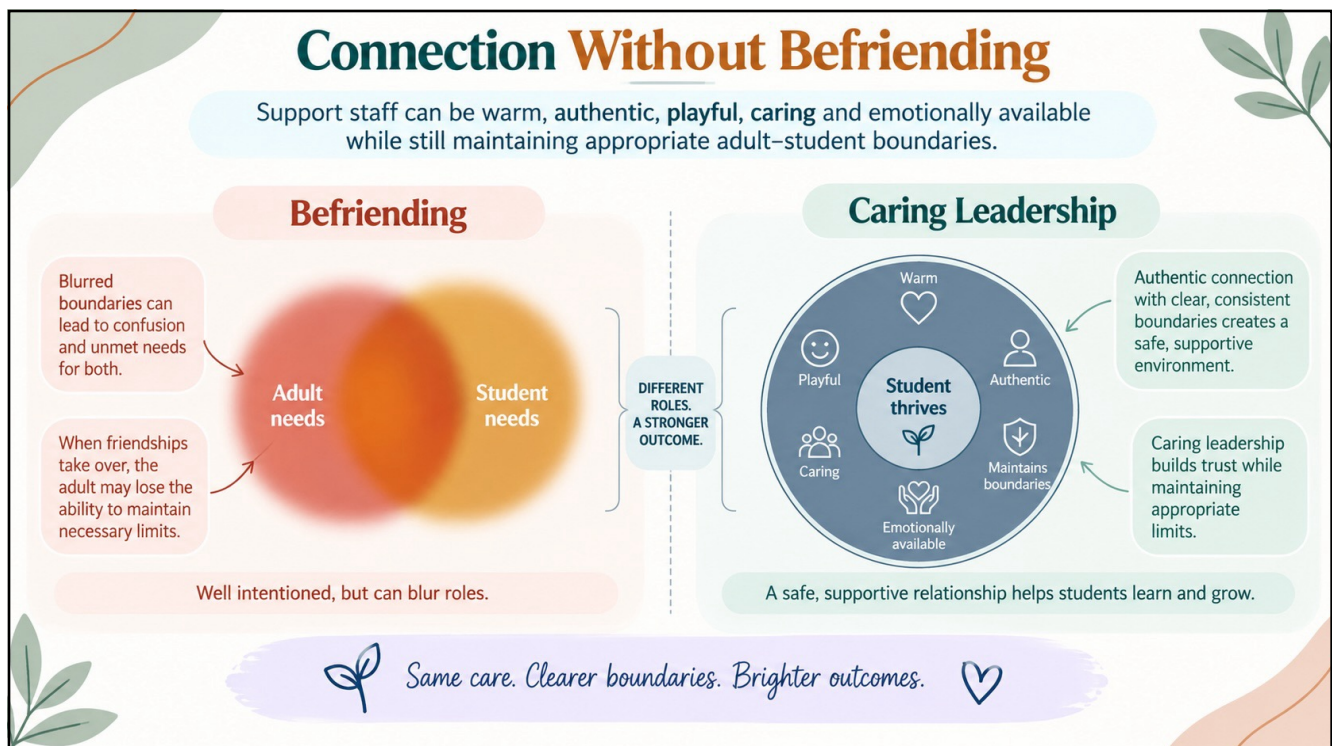
The Bigger Picture

A Multi-Tiered System of Accompaniment relies on a structured escalation of care. We do not wait for problems to arise. Instead, we build a proactive environment where interventions grow more focused and specialized only when foundational practices are insufficient.

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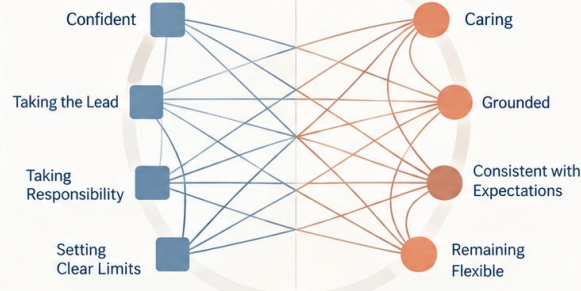
The Caring Leader

A STRONG POSTURE IS UNSHAKABLE IN ITS BOUNDARIES,
YET FLEXIBLE IN ITS APPROACH.



Structure

Provides clarity, consistency, and safety. Structure helps students know what to expect and feel secure enough to grow.



Relational

Builds trust, connection, and openness. A relational approach helps students feel seen, valued, and supported so they are more receptive to guidance.



When structure and relationship work together,
students feel **safe**, **supported**, and **ready to grow**.

5

Well Established Classroom Structures and Routines

A Tier 1 Practice for Strong Adult Posture

To create consistency and predictability.

Predictable routines create safer, calmer, and more connected classrooms.



Why It Matters

- ✓ Helps regulate the nervous system and reduces anxiety.
- ✓ Supports attention, engagement, and independence.
- ✓ Creates a sense of safety and belonging.
- ✓ Prevents challenging behaviour by meeting needs before they escalate.
- ✓ Allows more time for teaching and meaningful connection.



Key Practices

- ✓ Have a clear and explicit routine for arrival, transitions, and end of day.
- ✓ Use visual supports and consistent language.
- ✓ Set up organized materials and labelled turn-in trays.
- ✓ Establish clear expectations and procedures.
- ✓ Provide structure for independent work time and know when to offer support.
- ✓ Notify students, when possible, of changes in routine (special activities, teacher absences).
- ✓ Maintain consistency while being flexible when needed.



What It Can Look Like



Morning routine



Smooth transitions



Clear expectations



Organized materials



Independent work structures



Consistent communication



The Result

- ✓ A calmer, more focused classroom.
- ✓ More time for teaching and connection.
- ✓ Students who feel safe, capable, and included.
- ✓ A strong foundation for learning and growth.



Remember

Consistent routines support independence and create a sense of belonging for all students.

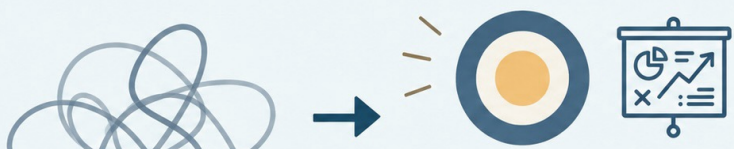


"Structure gives students the safety to focus on what really matters — relationships, learning, and growth."

6

Explicit Expectations

CLARITY CREATES CONFIDENCE



Lengthy explanations cause students to get lost.

- ✓ Speak clearly and give instructions in a concise, direct manner.
- ✓ Convey explicitly what is expected of them.
- ✓ Use visuals if needed to bypass cognitive overload.
- ✓ Establish coherent and concrete limits and boundaries.



The Core Reality

When expectations are unclear, students must work harder to understand, which increases confusion, stress, and the likelihood of challenging behaviors.



The Opportunity

Clear, explicit expectations reduce uncertainty, build student confidence, and create the conditions for cooperation and success.

7

Firm Care



Boundary

"The answer is still no."

"You can't have the iPad right now."

"That language is not okay."

"You need to stay in the classroom."



Regulation

"I'm going to help you through the no."

"I know it's hard to wait. I'm here with you until it's time."

"I won't let you use that language. Let's find a calmer way to say it."

"I see that you don't want to go. I'll walk with you and help you get started."

8

The Art of the Pivot

ADAPT WHEN NEEDED. KEEP STUDENTS MOVING FORWARD.

Plan A

Sometimes things don't go as planned.



Make it look as if it was your plan all along.

Plan B

Adjust flexibly and keep going.



The Core Reality

Plans rarely go exactly as expected. Flexibility helps adults stay regulated and models problem-solving for students.



The Opportunity

Have a backup plan, stay calm, and adjust in a way that maintains momentum and safety for all.

9

Attunement Versus Technique

IT'S THE RELATIONSHIP, NOT THE SCRIPT



Attunement means **accurately noticing** and responding to another person's emotional state while remaining **grounded** ourselves.



It is different from simply following a protocol.



One statement may feel deeply **comforting**.

Two adults may say exactly the same words:

“I can see that you're upset.”



The difference is not the script—it is the **relationship** and the **authenticity** behind it.



The other may feel **dismissive** or **mechanical**.

Attuned adults:



notice subtle changes in behaviour



adjust their expectations to the student's current state



remain flexible



communicate genuine curiosity



respond rather than react



Students do not need perfect adults.

They need adults who are emotionally present enough to notice them.



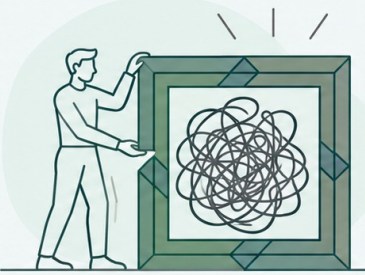
10

THE CORE INSIGHT OF A STRONG POSTURE

We cannot directly control student behaviour.
We manage the circumstances and the environment,
relying on co-regulation and de-escalation.



Controlling the Uncontrollable
 Trying to force a specific behavior often leads to more resistance.



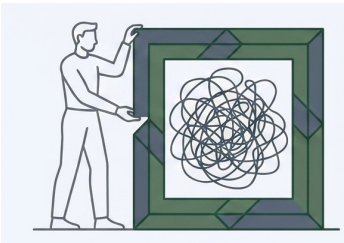
Managing the Environment
 Adjust the circumstances, provide structure, and use co-regulation and de-escalation.

The Core Reality
 We cannot directly control student behaviour. Lasting change comes from managing the environment, not trying to force compliance.

The Opportunity
 Focus on creating the conditions for regulation, connection, and success. A well-prepared environment helps everyone thrive.

11

 **Individual Reflection Question**

A TALE OF TWO CONVERSATIONS:

Attunement is about emotional presence, not just saying the right words. It requires us to check our own internal alignment before engaging.

Reflect on two recent conversations to understand how internal attunement shifts results:

- A conversation with a student that **went well** (What was your emotional state?)
- A conversation that escalated or **went poorly** (What was different about YOU?)

12

Adult Posture During Teaching & Learning

Every interaction matters.



Adult posture is not something we use only when behaviour becomes challenging.
It is present in **every** instructional interaction.



Every lesson contains hundreds of small relational moments.
Students notice **how teachers give directions, respond to confusion, wait for answers, correct errors, react to unfinished work, handle disagreement, respond to frustration, and support students who need more time.**



In other words, adult posture isn't separate from instruction.
It is the relational context in which learning happens.




Before learning


Direct instruction


Independent work


Group work


Feedback & correction


Assessment


Transitions


Mistakes & recovery

13

Adult Posture During Teaching & Learning

Same learning. A more supportive experience.



Instructional Moment	What Adult Posture Looks Like	What It Communicates to Students
 Before Learning	Welcoming students, establishing predictable routines, noticing emotional states, communicating expectations calmly and preparing students for what is coming.	“You belong here. You know what to expect.”
 Direct Instruction	Using a calm pace and tone, checking understanding without judgment, noticing confusion, allowing processing time and adjusting explanations when needed.	“You don’t have to understand immediately. I will help you get there.”
 Independent Work	Distinguishing between won’t and can’t yet, noticing frustration or overload, scaffolding without taking over and allowing appropriate movement, breaks or additional processing time.	“Struggling doesn’t mean you can’t do this. I’m here if you need support.”
 Group Work	Monitoring belonging and participation, supporting students who struggle socially, responding to conflict without humiliation and creating space for different ways of participating.	“Your voice matters here, and you are part of this group.”

 A supportive adult posture helps students feel safe, connected and confident to learn.

14

Support the Learner Without Removing the Learning

Same Expectations. More Support.
Every learner can grow.

I'm not doing this. This is stupid.

Different support. Same opportunity to learn.

Support today.
Greater possibility tomorrow.

- 1** **The student's words**
"I'm not doing this. This is stupid."
 This may be a sign of stress, overwhelm, frustration or fear of failure.
- 2** **Two common interpretations**

Defiance
→ enforce compliance.

Distress
→ remove the task.
- 3** **A co-regulation lens asks**
 "What is making access to this task difficult, and what support will help the student remain engaged with the learning?"
- 4** **A supportive teacher response**
"It looks like getting started feels like a lot right now. Let's just look at the first step together."

The academic expectation remains.
What changes is the amount of scaffolding.

15

Adult Posture During Teaching & Learning

Same learning. A more supportive experience.

Small moments. Big impact.

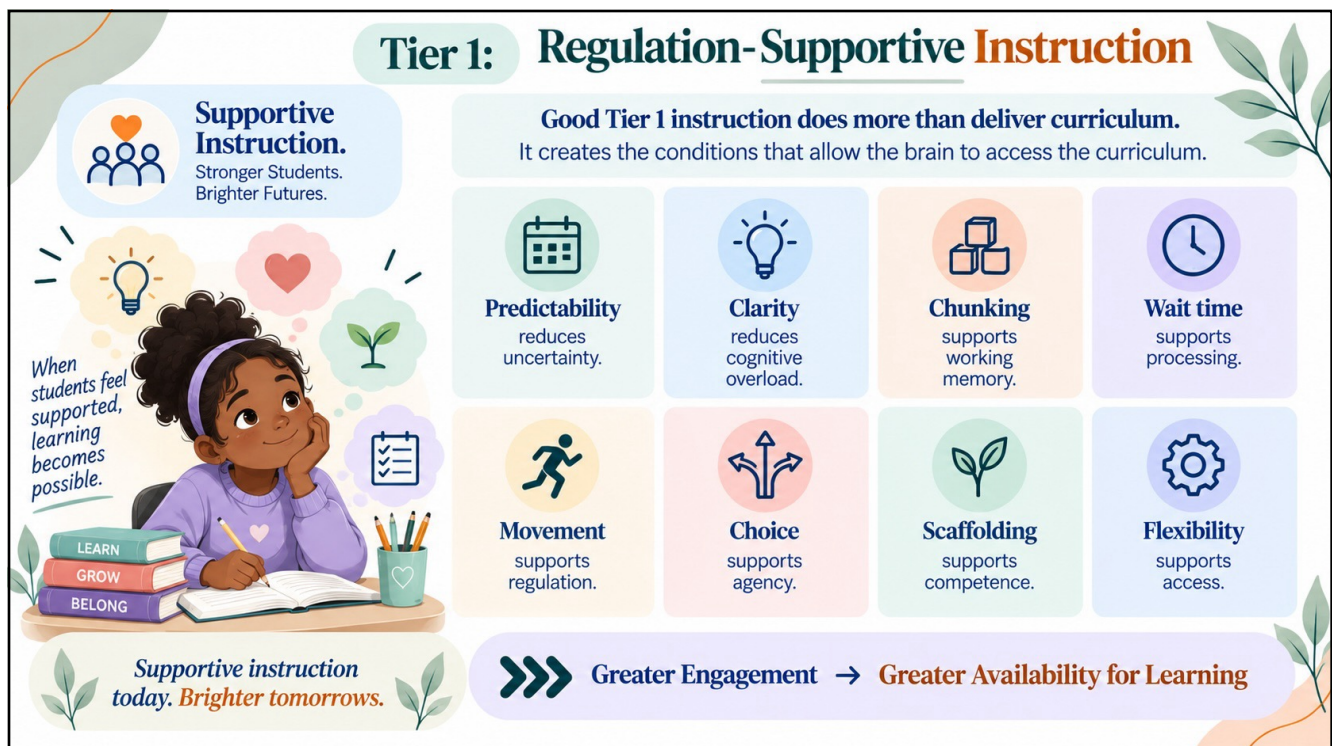
Instructional Moment	What Adult Posture Looks Like	What It Communicates to Students
Feedback & Correction	Correcting without shaming, separating the student's work or behaviour from their worth, being specific and maintaining warmth while holding expectations.	"Correction is information, not rejection."
Assessment	Recognizing that evaluation can increase stress, communicating expectations clearly, reducing unnecessary threat and helping students remain regulated enough to demonstrate what they know.	"This is an opportunity to show what you know—not a judgment of who you are."
Transitions	Providing warning, structure and predictability; recognizing the executive-function demands involved in stopping, shifting attention, organizing materials and beginning something new.	"I'll help you move from one demand to the next."
Mistakes & Recovery	Normalizing mistakes, remaining curious rather than disappointed, helping students repair and try again, and communicating confidence in their capacity to recover.	"A mistake doesn't change how I see you. We can try again."

A supportive adult posture helps students feel safe, connected and confident to learn.

16



17



18

Co-Regulation ≠ Lowering Academic Expectations

Support today, stronger learners tomorrow.

Co-regulation does not mean:

- Removing challenge
- Rescuing students from productive struggle
- Ignoring behaviour
- Eliminating accountability

Co-regulation means:

Providing enough relational and regulatory support for students to remain available for challenge.

We don't remove the challenge.
We provide the support students need to meet it.

19

Tier 1: Designing Instruction for Regulation and Learning

Proactive supports. Greater access. Stronger learning.

Small changes. Big impact.

Tier 1 Practice	What It Might Look Like	Why It Matters for Regulation
Predictable lesson structures	Similar opening routines, agenda visible, clear beginning/middle/end.	Reduces uncertainty and helps students anticipate what comes next.
Instructional clarity	Short directions, modelling, examples, checking understanding.	Reduces confusion before confusion becomes frustration.
Chunking	"Do questions 1–3, then check in with me" rather than presenting the entire task at once.	Reduces working-memory and cognitive demands.
Managing cognitive load	One direction at a time, visual supports, reducing unnecessary information.	Helps students stay cognitively available for learning.

When instruction is well designed, students can stay more regulated, engaged and available for learning.

20

Tier 1: Additional Instructional Practices That Support Regulation and Learning

Everyday strategies. Healthier brains. Brighter learners.

Small changes.
Big impact.

Teacher Practice	What It Might Look Like	Why It Matters for Regulation
Wait time	Giving students processing time before repeating, correcting or prompting.	Prevents adult urgency from becoming student pressure.
Transitions	Previewing transitions, countdowns, clear routines for moving between activities.	Supports shifting and reduces abrupt changes.
Movement & regulation opportunities	Brief movement opportunities, flexible positioning, purposeful pauses.	Helps students regulate activation without having to reach a crisis point.
Pedagogical flexibility	Different ways to access material or demonstrate understanding while maintaining the learning goal.	Separates the essential learning expectation from unnecessary barriers.

When instruction is responsive and regulation-supportive, students are more engaged, confident and ready to learn.

21

Individual Reflection Question

UNIVERSAL Practices
for ALL students at Tier 1

REFLECTION ON TIER 1 PRACTICES:

- Which Tier 1 universal practices (e.g., explicit boundaries, structures, routines, adapted scheduling) **already exist in my classroom?**
- Which would have the biggest impact if **strengthened?**

22