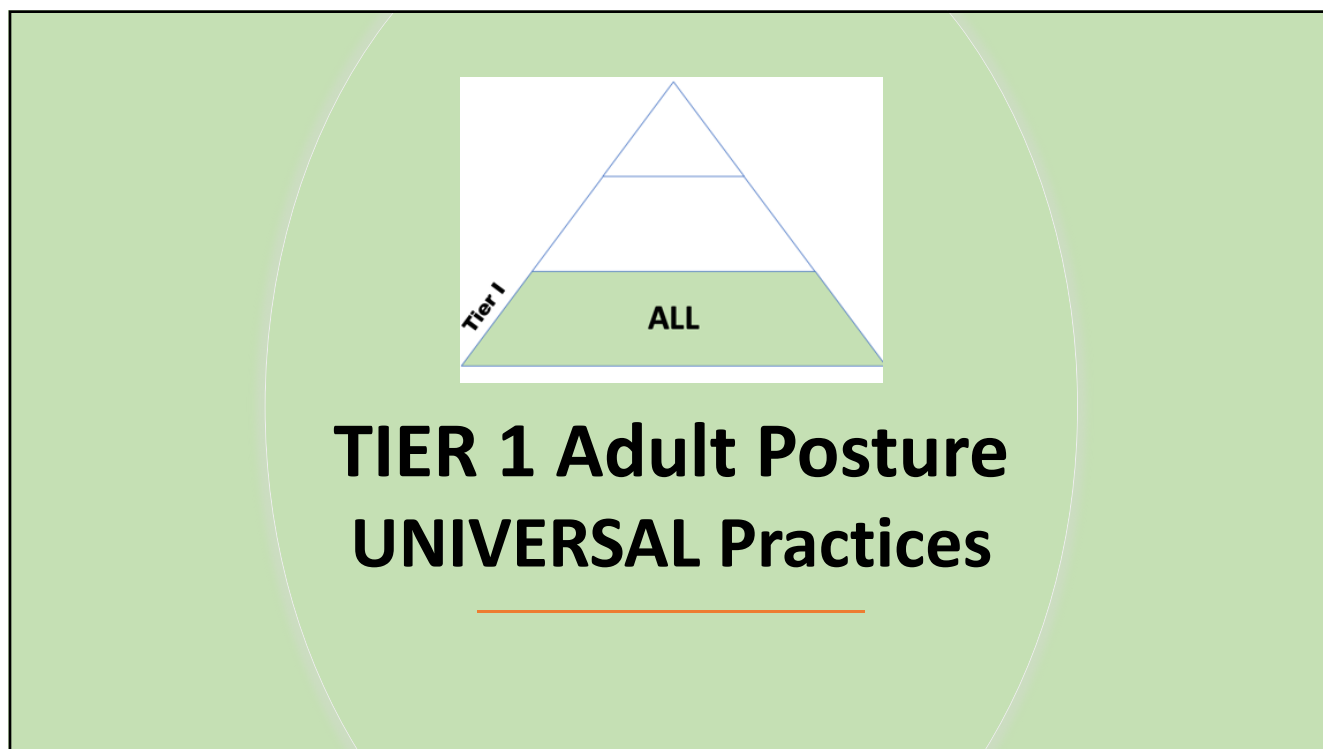




1

TIER 3
TIER 2
TIER 1

Examples of a *Strong Adult Posture* at Tier 1

We belong. We matter. We can.

Tier 1 universal practices

Proactive, preventative practices that create safe, predictable, and inclusive learning environments for all.

1 **Providing a caring leadership posture** (warm, confident, taking the lead, taking responsibility, setting clear limits, being consistent with expectations while remaining flexible, being calm and grounded before responding).

2 **Intentionally building relationships without befriending students** (they need that natural healthy hierarchy to feel safe and taken care of).

3 **Approaching students with authenticity, curiosity and interest**, rather than with judgment.

4 **Relying on the key elements to effect change:** structures, routines, etc. (these are preventive/proactive at Tier 1 and establish a predictable foundation).

5 **Conveying explicitly what is expected of them** (with the help of visuals if needed) and establishing coherent and concrete limits and boundaries (without getting upset if the student's push back).

6 **Speaking clearly**, giving information and instructions in a concise and clear manner (they may get lost in lengthy explanations)

7 **Managing the circumstances and the environment** rather than trying to directly control student behaviour (relying on **co-regulation** and **de-escalation strategies** if needed).

8 **Adjusting when things don't go as planned** (making it look like as if it was your plan all along) and ensuring to have a backup plan as an alternative solution.

9 **Honouring the student's personal space** and providing enough time for them to assimilate and complete the task at their own pace.

10 **Actively engaging the student** in communicating their needs and where they are at in their emotional regulation process.

11 **Being mindful** that the adult expectations may vary depending on the student's profile, maturity level and individual differences.

A strong adult posture is grounded in connection, consistency, and compassion.

It's not about perfect responses, but about a **purposeful presence**.

SAFETY
Create physical and emotional safety.

RELATIONSHIP
Build trusting relationships and a sense of belonging.

STRUCTURE
Use predictable routines and clear expectations.

REGULATION
Support co-regulation and self-regulation.

BELONGING
Foster inclusion, respect and connection for all.

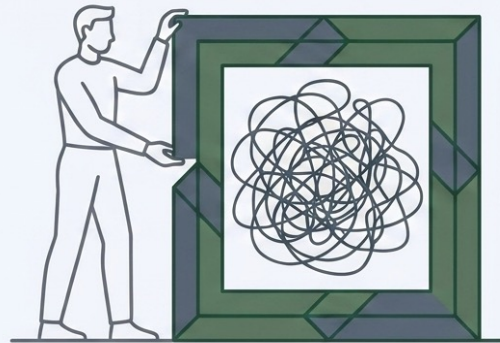
2

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

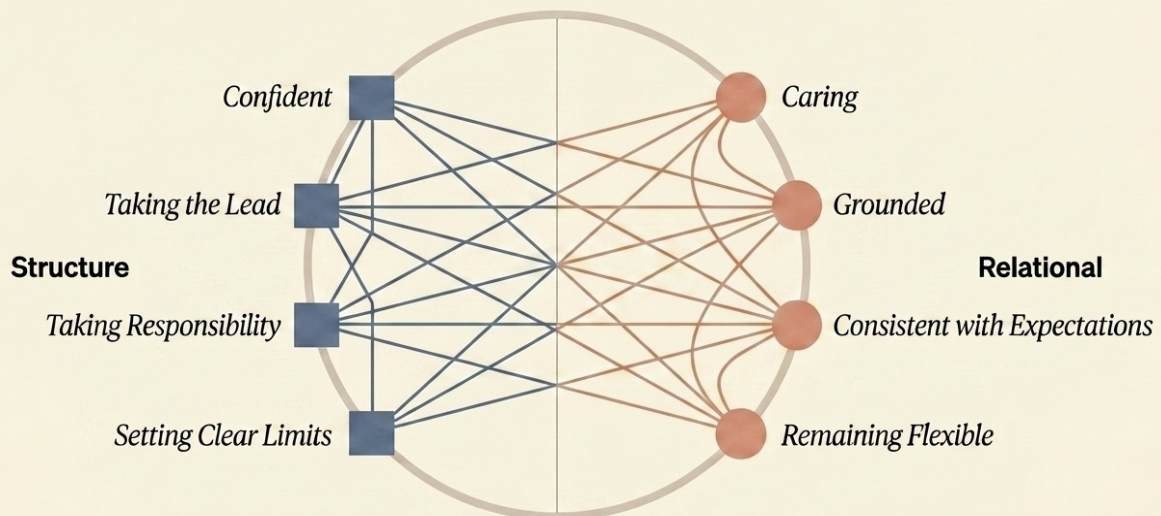


Managing the Environment

NotebookLM

3

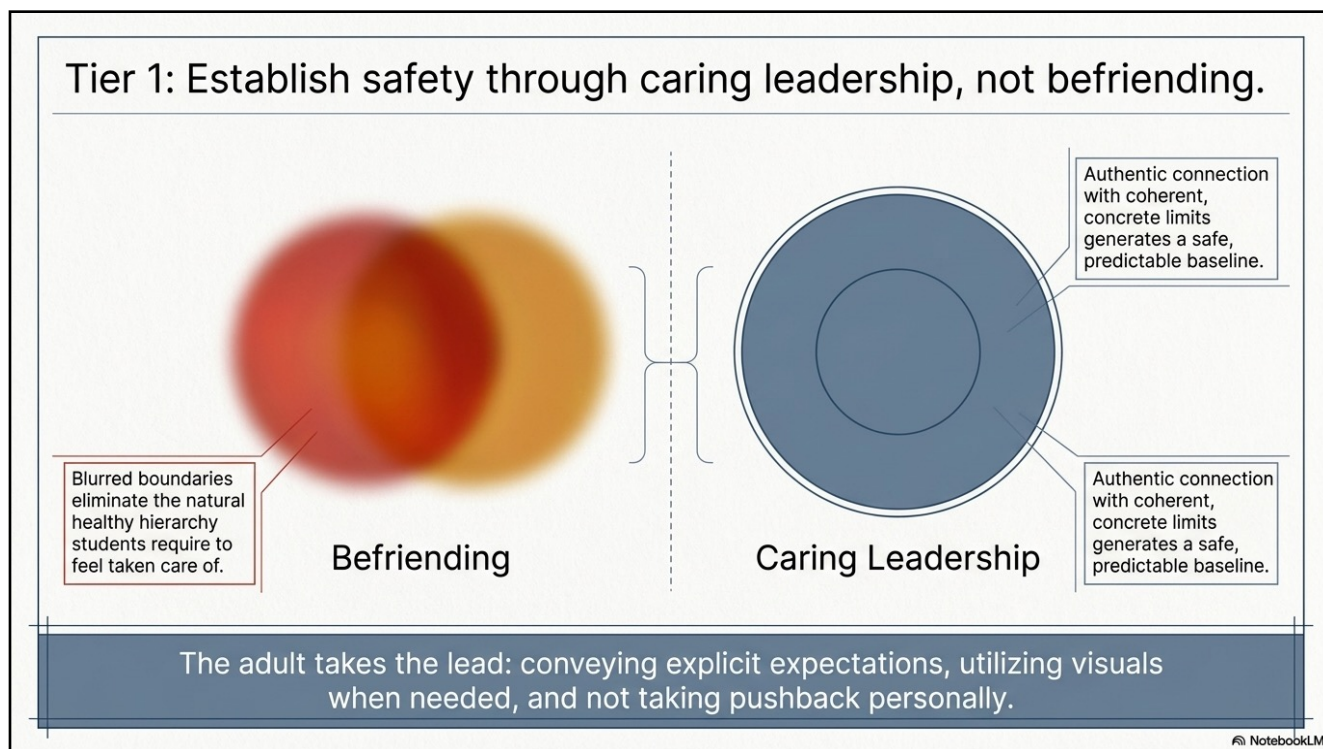
The Caring Leader



A strong posture is unshakable in its boundaries, yet flexible in its approach.

NotebookLM

4



5

Well established classroom structures and routines

⇒ To create consistency and predictability. ⇒

Our Classroom Routine

Hang up your coat and book bag.

Put your papers in the basket.

Answer the question of the day.

Write your name on your paper.

Today we have _____.

music
art
gym
guidance

Some of the key suggestions:

- Having a clear and explicit routine around the morning arrival, transition, or end-of-day/period departure
- Offering homework/assignment turn-in trays with labels
- Setting up structure around independent work time & asking for help
- Notifying students, when possible, of any changes in routine (special activities, teacher absences)

6



Clear and explicit classroom expectations



To help clarify with students what a positive learning environment looks like.

Some of the key suggestions:

- 

Regularly modeling the classroom expectations throughout the school year
- 

Providing a variety of engaging and playful ways to prompt students (through stories, chants, role-playing, games)
- 

Offering a variety of visuals to help prompt students (poster of classroom expectations, hand signals for common requests)

IN OUR classroom

-  WE ARE ON TIME, PREPARED, AND READY TO LEARN
-  WE CLEAN UP AFTER OURSELVES
-  WE RESPECT OTHERS AND RESPECT OURSELVES
-  WE LISTEN WHEN OTHERS ARE TALKING
-  WE ALWAYS USE KIND WORDS
-  WE BELIEVE IN OURSELVES AND TRY OUR BEST

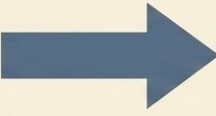


7

Explicit Expectations



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.

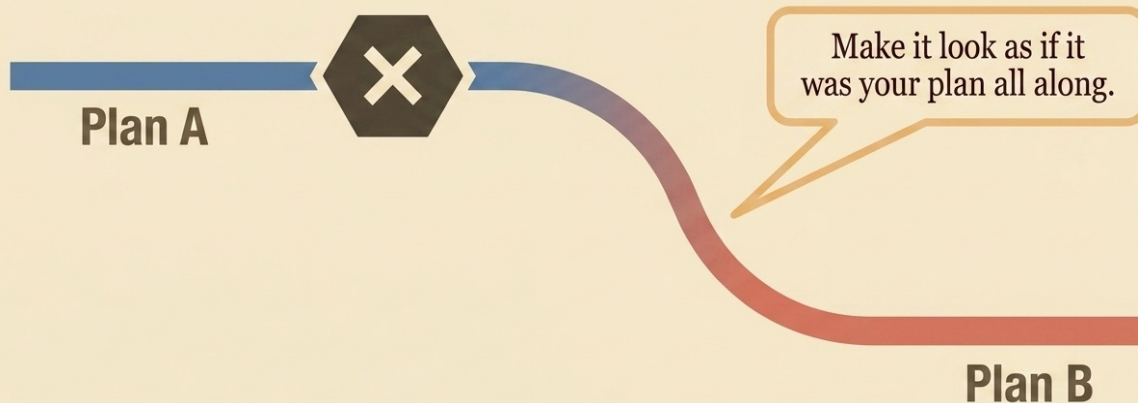
Establish coherent and concrete limits and boundaries.



8

The Art of the Pivot

Adjust flexibly when things don't go as planned.
Ensure you have a backup plan as an alternative solution.



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9

THE ARCHITECTURE OF POSTURE: RESPONSE SCRIPTS.

Scenario	The Reactive Response (Instead of...)	The Posture Response (Try this...)
 During Conflict	Figure it out yourselves.	Something happened between you two. Let's work through it together.
 During Emotional Upset	Stop crying. You're fine. / Calm down.	You're having a hard time right now. I'm here.
 During Mistakes	That's wrong.	You haven't figured it out yet. Let's try another way.
 During Challenging Behavior	What's wrong with you?	Something seems difficult for you right now. Let's see what you need.

10

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice

DURING CONFLICT: From Separation to Guided Problem-Solving



Conflict between children is inevitable and developmentally important. It is often where children learn negotiation, empathy, perspective-taking, and emotional regulation. However, the adult response can either shut down learning or transform the moment into a powerful teaching opportunity.



In practice, this might involve helping each child share their perspective, naming emotions, slowing the interaction down, and supporting repair. The adult becomes a facilitator of connection rather than a referee or judge.



Over time, children learn that conflict is **not a threat to belonging**, but an **opportunity for understanding and growth**.

INSTEAD OF A DISTANCING RESPONSE SUCH AS:

"Figure it out yourselves."

AN EDUCATOR WITH A RELATIONAL POSTURE MIGHT SAY:

"Something happened between you two. Let's work through it together."



THIS SHIFT COMMUNICATES SEVERAL IMPORTANT MESSAGES:

- The relationship matters.
- Conflict is not something to avoid or abandon.
- Children are not left alone in difficult social moments.
- Adults are present to guide, not to punish or withdraw.

Scenario 01: Navigating Conflict.

The Shift: Isolation → Partnership.



11

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice.



During Emotional Upset: From Control to Co-Regulation



When children experience emotional overwhelm, they need **presence more than instruction**.

Their nervous system is not ready for reasoning or correction; it is seeking safety and regulation.



INSTEAD OF a directive such as:

"Calm down."



AN ATTUNED ADULT might say:

"You're having a hard time right now. I'm here."



This subtle shift is powerful.

"Calm down" often feels dismissive or demanding, so a child who is already overwhelmed. It signals that emotional expression is unacceptable.

In contrast, "I'm here" communicates steadiness, safety, and support.

In these moments, the adult posture focuses on:



Staying physically and emotionally grounded



Reducing stimulation and pressure



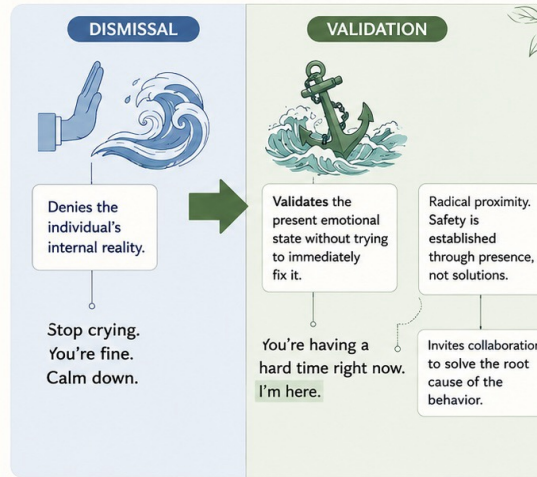
Naming the emotional experience



Offering calm presence rather than immediate solutions

Scenario 02: Emotional Upset.

The Shift: Dismissal → Validation.



The goal is not to rush the child out of **their emotion**, but to help them move through it safely. The adult becomes an **emotional anchor** until the child can regain regulation.



12

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice.

During Mistakes: From Correction to Learning Opportunity

Mistakes are a natural and essential part of learning.

However, the way adults respond to mistakes shapes whether children associate error with **shame** or with **growth**.

INSTEAD OF:

"That's wrong."

→

AN EDUCATOR MIGHT SAY:

"You haven't figured it out yet. Let's try another way."

THIS RESPONSE DOES SEVERAL IMPORTANT THINGS:

- It removes judgment from the learning process.
- It separates the child's identity from the outcome.
- It normalizes struggle as part of learning.
- It invites persistence and exploration.

WHEN CHILDREN CONSISTENTLY EXPERIENCE MISTAKES AS OPPORTUNITIES RATHER THAN FAILURES, THEY DEVELOP:

- Persistence
- Curiosity
- Confidence in problem-solving
- Willingness to take academic risks

Over time, they begin to internalize the idea:

"I can learn, even when I don't get it right the first time."

Scenario 03: Managing Mistakes

The Shift: Judgment → Process-Oriented

JUDGMENT

That's wrong.

Focuses on the person, not the process.

Finality.
The interaction ends in failure.

PROCESS-ORIENTED

You haven't figured it out yet. Let's try another way.

Focuses cognitive energy on the process, not the person.

This is a foundation for lifelong learning and resilience.

When adults respond with curiosity, compassion, and calm leadership, children feel safe, supported, and able to regulate.

13

What Adult Posture Looks Like in Practice.

During Challenging Behaviour: From Judgment to Understanding

Challenging behaviour can easily trigger frustration in adults, especially when it disrupts learning or impacts others.

However, an adult posture grounded in curiosity and connection reframes behaviour as communication rather than character.

INSTEAD OF:

"What's wrong with you?"

→

AN EDUCATOR MIGHT SAY:

"Something seems difficult for you right now. Let's see what you need."

This subtle shift is powerful.

"Calm down" often feels dismissive or demanding to a child who is already overwhelmed. It implies that emotional expression is unacceptable.

In contrast, "I'm here" communicates steadiness, safety, and support.

From there, the adult can explore:

What the child might be feeling

What need is not being met

What skill is still developing

What support might help in the moment

Scenario 04: Challenging Behavior.

The Shift: Blame → Curiosity.

BLAME

Forces the nervous system into immediate defense mode.

What's wrong with you?

CURIOSITY

Something seems difficult for you right now. Let's see what you need.

This does not remove expectations or boundaries. Instead, it changes the pathway to addressing behaviour—from punishment and correction toward support and skill-building.

Children are far more likely to cooperate when they feel *understood* rather than *judged*.

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