PRACTICAL & SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTIONS

FOR NEURODIVERSITY-AFFIRMING CARE IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

1 — AUTHENTICITY, HONESTY & CONGRUENCE

One's words, body language, actions & energy must embody the knowing that **regulation and felt safety are core to any learning** that might happen. These kids can see through you.

2 — SELF AWARENESS & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Ongoing attention to **self-care & personal regulation** as the adult. What helps you stay grounded? Do it! Take a break if needed. You are to **be the calm in the chaos.**

3 — SLOW DOWN, QUIET DOWN & MINIMIZE EYE CONTACT

Slow down & minimize your words, body language, eye contact, movement, & breathing. This is non-threatening, non-demanding, non-judging, and facilitates felt safety.

4 — GET LOW

Sit beside, across from, or even below the child's level. Sitting on the floor is a **non-threatening position** that invites safety & connection.

5 — BELIEVE THE CHILD

Don't write-off a child's complaints or requests as unreasonable or try to convince them otherwise. **Let them know you believe them** and genuinely care and want to help.

6 — MIRROR & MODEL

Pickup a fidget if the child indicates a need to hold something. **Demonstrate to give permission**. Use humour or be silly if they are receptive to it. **Elicit their help** if they are keen.

7 — SEND OPEN INVITATIONS & MINIMIZE VERBAL LANGUAGE

Without expectation of response, **offer an observation,** rather than questions. Then leave it. **Model safety in silent, slow, & nonjudgmental presence.** Use: W.A.I.T. - "Why Am I Talking?"

8 — TAKE ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE CHILD

Work **collaboratively** to determine the child's needs, and **take action to help** solve their stated problem. Find out what has worked and what hasn't, and enact change.

9 — LOW DEMAND APPROACH

Minimize "asks", questions, your adult agenda for academics or adult-imposed "learning," & any judgment of the child's choices or actions. **Provide safety as needed**.

10 — NON-JUDGMENTAL PRESENCE

It really is OK if the child is not engaged in the school task. They will be ok. **They will actually be better off long-term when regulation and connection are continually prioritized.**

11 — PLAY

Allow for **solo or side-by-side play** with **minimal adult-imposed** rules, words, or direction. Join a child in their interests. **Do not exploit their interests** to gain compliance.

12 — BODY DOUBLING

Join; be side-by-side doing your own task. **Release your agenda & your focus on the child's performance** & allow for coregulation with your low demand, affirming presence.