

From Understanding to Embodied Skill

with Sarah Buffie, MSW, LSW



Every CASA moment runs through **your nervous system first**. Here's a pocket guide for tending it, and for offering cues of safety to the children and families you serve.

The PLAY arc *for you, and with a child*

P

PAUSE

You: Three long exhales before you walk in.

With a child: Slow your pace. Let the first minute be quiet.

L

LISTEN

You: Feel your feet. Find three things you like looking at.

With a child: Sit side by side. Listen all the way to the end.

A

ACTIVATE

You: Shake it out. Hum in the car. Laugh on purpose.

With a child: Tap a rhythm together. Play silly, with choice.

Y

YIELD

You: One slow breath out. Hand on your heart.

With a child: Soften your voice. Let silence be okay.

Try it in the moments that matter

Transitions + goodbyes

Create a ritual that belongs to the two of you: a handshake, a rhythm, a "see you next time" song.

Waiting periods

Court hallways and late visits. Play I spy, hum together, or trace a slow breath on your fingers.

Hard conversations

Check your own state first. Slow your words, soften your face, and give choices wherever you can.

Rupture + repair

It will happen (to all of us!). Come back, name it simply, and reconnect. Repair builds trust.

My commitment *small, specific, and doable*

One way I'll reset my nervous system: _____

When and where I'll do it: _____

One cue of safety I'll offer a child: _____

Who helps me co-regulate: _____

CONNECT WITH US!



You cannot co-regulate another nervous system from a depleted one.

Sarah Buffie, MSW, LSW · sarah@soulbirdconsulting.info · soulbirdconsulting.info

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