A ONE-PAGE FIELD REFERENCE FOR PARENTS

The Five Phases — *written for one child: yours.*

THE WHOLE POINT

The right skill, one phase too late, is what makes things worse.

PHASE	WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO	MY CHILD — IN MY WORDS
1 Baseline *Most of the day. The phase everything else gets built in.*	• Settled. Usual voice, usual movement. • Can wait, switch tasks, take a small change. • Comes to you, or is happy near you.	• Connect before you need anything. A few unhurried minutes, daily, when nothing is wrong. • Use what already works — the words, the order, the music, the chair. • **Write it down now,** while it is calm. Nobody writes a good plan mid-crisis.	× Don't save your attention for the hard moments. × Don't change a routine just because today is going well. × Don't assume a new carer can see any of this.	*What settled looks like for my child:*
2 Trigger *Something lands. The phase everyone skips.*	• A small change: quieter or louder than usual, stillness, a repeated question. • Hands over ears, leaving the room, a shift in pace. • Often it is not the obvious thing.	• Notice early, and say so plainly: *"That got loud. I'll turn it down."* • Remove or soften what you can — turn it down, make it smaller, give more time. • This is where the least effort does the most work.	× Don't reason, lecture, or ask why yet. × Don't push through on "it's nearly finished". × Don't wait to be sure. Being early costs nothing.	*My child's early signs, and what sets them off:*
3 Escalation *Rising. Still reachable — but with fewer words, not more.*	• Louder and faster — or very still. • Repeating, scripting, pacing, pushing away. • Words get fewer, and harder to find.	• Name the feeling before you solve anything: *"That's too much right now."* • Offer two real choices — both of which you can live with. • Lower voice, slower pace, fewer words. Give room.	× Don't add words, questions, or more people. × Don't renegotiate the rules in this phase. × Don't take it personally. It isn't aimed at you.	*What helps my child here — and what makes it worse:*
4 Crisis *Safety only. Teaching stops here.*	• Past talking. • Your child cannot reach the skills they have on a calm day. • This is not a choice they are making.	• Safety first, and nothing else. • Minimal words. Move furniture and people, not the child, where you can. • Follow the plan you wrote when it was calm, and the one your child's own team agreed.	× Don't teach, correct, or hand out consequences now. × Don't demand eye contact or an answer. × Don't crowd. An audience makes it longer.	*Our agreed plan, and who to call first:*
5 Recovery *Longer than it looks. The body is still settling.*	• Tired, tearful, quiet, hungry, sleepy. • Sometimes apologetic — sometimes straight back to normal in a way that surprises you. • Looking fine is not the same as being fine.	• Presence and quiet. Let it be boring. • Water, food, time, something predictable. • Come back to it later — hours later, or tomorrow.	× Don't debrief yet. × Don't lead with consequences or "what happened". × Don't assume it's over because it looks over.	*What my child needs afterwards, and how long it takes:*

This is the same five-phase model we teach to professional staff in group homes, day programs and schools — written here for one autistic child rather than a caseload. It is general information for everyday care, not medical advice, and it does not replace a plan made by your child's own team. Fill the last column in your own words and it becomes the handover: print it, stick it on the fridge, hand it to anyone who looks after your child. **Free to copy and share. No form, no email, no signup.**

The Steady Method™
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SteadyCare™ — write it once, for every caregiver you authorize.