📋 THE 3-MINUTE REGULATING CHECK-IN

Objective: *To support a dysregulated, overwhelmed teacher by providing adult co-regulation, validation, and immediate micro-support without trying to "fix" systemic issues.*

⏱️ Minute 1: Regulate Yourself First (The Internal Prep)

Before you even interact with the teacher, you must manage your own emotional thermostat. You cannot co-regulate someone else if you are in a frantic or dysregulated state.

- **Action Steps:**
  - Stop before opening the classroom door.
  - Take one slow, deep breath.
  - Consciously lower your shoulders and soften your facial expression.
- **The Mindset:** Shift from a *Transactional* mindset ("What needs to get done?") to a *Relational* mindset ("Who is doing the work?"). Remind yourself: *You do not have to fix the staffing shortage in this conversation—your only job is to acknowledge what they are living through.*

⏱️ Minute 2: Name It to Tame It (Validate the Reality)

Step into the room and immediately out the difficult reality of the situation. This builds predictive trust and ensures the teacher feels seen, valued, and less isolated in their crisis.

- **Action Steps:**
  - Observe the classroom dynamics immediately.
  - Acknowledge the hard thing out loud with zero judgment.
- **Verbal Script Options:**
  - *"I know there are 12 two-year-olds in here and you're flying solo right now. This is incredibly hard."*
  - *"I see you. This is incredibly hard. What you're doing matters."*

⏱️ Minute 3: Offer Micro-Support (The Relief Valve)

Do not make unrealistic promises you can't keep (like hiring an aide by tomorrow). Instead, offer immediate, highly manageable, and concrete physical relief.

- **Action Steps:**
  - Be honest about operational limitations.
  - Step in physically to take over the room for exactly 180 seconds.
  - Direct the teacher to fully detach, clear their mind, or reset physiologically.
- **Verbal Script Option:**
  - *"I can't send you a sub right now, but I can take over the room for exactly 3 minutes while you go drink a glass of water and look at your phone. Go."*

📝 Post-Check-In Action: Gratitude-Based Follow-Up

To ensure this check-in acts as a true retention strategy rather than a temporary band-aid, close the loop later with a specific, targeted, and witnessed piece of gratitude.

- **What to Avoid:** Deficit-focused feedback or clinical compliance write-ups left on bulletin boards (which create shame, anxiety, and disconnection).
- **What to Do:** Write a quick note or say words that recognize their invisible labor and emotional patience.
- **Follow-Up Script Example:**
  - *"Thank you for the way you handled that difficult transition after lunch. Your patience changed the trajectory of the entire afternoon."*