The Parent as Teacher/Coach

See your role as that of a teacher or coach to your children. Demonstrate in detail how you would like them to behave.

- Try to set aside time on a regular basis to do something fun with your children.
- Rather than tell them what not to do, teach and show them what they should do.
- Use descriptive praise when they do something well. Say, “I like how you.” Be specific.
- Help your child learn to express how he/she feels. Say, “You seem frustrated,” “How are you feeling?” “Are you upset?” “You look like you are angry about that.” “It’s OK to feel that way.”
- Try to see a situation the way your children do. Listen carefully to them. Try to form a mental picture of how it would look to them.
- Use a soft, confident tone of voice to redirect them when they are upset.
- Be a good listener: Use good eye contact. Physically get down to the level of smaller children. Do not interrupt. Ask open-ended questions rather than questions that can be answered with a yes or no. Repeat back to them what you heard.
- Make sure they understand directions. Have them repeat them back.
- When possible give them choices of when and how to comply with a request.
- Look for gradual changes in behavior. Don’t expect too much. Praise behavior that is coming closer to the desired goal.
- Develop a nonverbal sign (gesture) that your children will accept as a signal that they are being inappropriate and need to turn around their behavior. This helps them to respond to your prompt without getting upset.

1-800-4-A-CHILD