Guidelines for Parent/Child Relationships

- Never disagree about discipline in front of the children.
- Never give an order, request, or command without being able to enforce it at the time.
- Be consistent, that is, reward or punish the same behavior in the same manner as much as possible.
- Agree on what behavior is desirable and not desirable.
- Agree on how to respond to undesirable behavior.
- Make it as clear as possible what the child is to expect if he or she performs the undesirable behavior.
- Make it very clear what the undesirable behavior is. It is not enough to say, “Your room is messy.” *Messy* should be specified in terms of exactly what is meant: “You’ve left dirty clothes on the floor, dirty plates on your desk, and your bed is not made.”
- Once you have stated your position and the child attacks that position, do not keep defending yourself. Just restate the position once more and then stop responding to the attacks.
- Look for gradual changes in behavior. Don’t expect too much. Praise behavior that is coming closer to the desired goal.
- Remember that your behavior serves as a model for your children’s behavior.
- If one of you is disciplining a child and the other enters the room, that other person should not step in on the argument in progress.
- Reward desirable behavior as much as possible by verbal praise, touch or something tangible such as a toy, food or money.
- Both of you should have an equal share in the responsibility of discipline as much as possible.’

Taken from, www.childdevelopmentinstitute.com