1. **We communicate authentically**. We speak in our authentic voices (though a bit more slowly with babies and toddlers), use real words and talk about real things, especially things that directly pertain to our babies and that are happening *now*. We encourage babies to build communication skills by asking them questions, affording them plenty of time to respond, always acknowledging their communication.

2. **We invite babies to actively participate in caregiving activities** like diapering, bathing, meals and bedtime rituals **and give them our full attention during these activities.** This inclusion and focused attention nurtures our parent-child relationship, providing children the sense of security they need to be able to separate and engage in self-directed play.

3. **We encourage uninterrupted, self-directed play** by offering even the youngest infants free play opportunities, sensitively observing so as not to needlessly interrupt, and trusting that our child's play choices are *enough*. Perfect, actually.

4. **We allow children to develop motor and cognitive skills naturally** according to their innate timetables by offering them free play and movement opportunities in an enriching environment, rather than teaching, restricting or otherwise interfering with these organic processes. Our role is development is primarily *trust*.

5. **We value intrinsic motivation and inner-directedness**, so we acknowledge effort and take care not to over-praise. We trust our children to know themselves better than we know them, so we allow children to lead when they play and choose enrichment activities, rather than projecting our own interests. We encourage our children's passions and support them to fulfill their dreams.

6. **We encourage children to express their emotions** by openly accepting and acknowledging them.

7. **We recognize that children need confident, empathetic leaders and clear boundaries,** but not shaming, distractions, punishments or time out.

8. **We allow children to problem-solve and experience and learn from age-appropriate conflicts** with our support.

9. **We understand the power of our modeling** and recognize that our children are learning from us through our every word and action about love, relationships, empathy, generosity, gratitude, patience, tolerance, kindness, honesty and respect. Most profoundly, they're learning about *themselves*, their abilities and their worth, their place in our hearts and in the world.

By Janet Lansbury