

**Basic Guidelines for Working with Children in the Classroom**  
**Adapted from the document by the same name,**  
**by Colleen Strohm, director, Chrysalis Home School**

1. Be respectful of the children. Speak to them as you would to good friends.
2. Try to encourage a calm atmosphere. When you want to speak to a child, walk to where she is and speak directly to her.
3. Children learn from us as roll models. Don't do **anything** you don't want to see them doing.
4. Encourage independence in the children by helping them disengage from the adults as the center focus.
5. Encourage interdependence amongst the children. "Ask \_\_\_\_ to help. She's great at puzzles". This boosts the helper's self-esteem while encouraging the asking child to pursue other avenues for assistance.
6. Listen to the children's words as well as their behavior. "I need help" often means "I want to be near you". Acting out often means, "Pay attention to me".
7. If a child calls to you from across the room, motion for him to come closer and thank him for doing so.
8. If children are loud and you want them to be quiet, ask them in a very soft voice. Whispering can be very effective.
9. If you don't handle a situation as well as you would have liked, apologize to the child. It is important that they see that we, too, make mistakes.
10. When a child complains, "she's bothering me!", help him to tell her what he wants to say. Give him the language if necessary. Stand by as an adult presence, not the all-powerful decision-maker.
11. Limit words when speaking with a child. Too many words and children get lost; they don't need lengthy explanations.
12. Phrase requests in a positive manner. "Please sit on a chair" rather than "Get off the table".
13. Give words of thanks and encouragement when a child least expects it - especially when a child is having a "bad" day.
14. Speak quietly, directly, and at eye level to a child.

15. Don't use words like "good" and "bad" as adjectives. More appropriate are "cooperative" and "uncooperative" or "helpful" and "unhelpful".
16. Encourage children to describe how they feel: angry, frustrated, proud, sad, happy, etc.
17. Never discuss a child in a negative way in front of the children.
18. Discuss children only with their own parents.
19. Avoid lengthy conversations about your personal lives that exclude the children. While you are working you are there for them.
20. Don't ask questions unless you are prepared to give a choice. Say "Please pick up the blocks" rather than "Do you want to pick up the blocks?"
21. If you are having difficulty with a particular child, step back and allow the teacher deal with the child for a while. Sometimes a change in energy will change the situation.
22. Invite but don't force participation.
23. Praise the effort, not the end product.
24. Don't do for the children what they can do for themselves.
25. Be Sincere