

JUST FOR MY BABY

by LuAnn Pierce, MSW, CMSW

During your first year of life I will try to . . .

- make myself emotionally available to you so you can experience intimacy.
- nurture and preserve the attachment between us to prepare you for secure relationships the rest of your life.
- make you feel secure and cared for so you will trust others.
- ensure your safety and protection so you will know that you can rely on me to take care of you.
- meet your physical needs consistently so you can enjoy your childhood.
- reinforce your worth as an individual so you will value yourself.
- talk to you so you will value communication.

During your early childhood I will try to . . .

- teach you what is right so you will grow up to be of good character.
- set clear boundaries so you will have a clear understanding of your own boundaries.
- expose you to new things so you will learn tolerance and resist stereotypes.
- encourage you to try new things so you will not be afraid to explore and learn things unknown.
- model perseverance so you will know the importance of not giving up.
- provide you with structure so you learn the importance of routines and reliability.
- teach you to make choices and solve problems so you will become an independent thinker.
- discipline you as needed so you will learn self control.
- interact with others in an appropriate manner so you learn good interpersonal skills.
- treat you fairly so you will treat others with fairness.
- teach you moderation so you can avoid over indulgence.

show you how to share with others so you will be a giver in life.

respect you so you will respect yourself, others, your belongings and the environment.

foster autonomy so you will learn to be interdependent.

encourage spontaneity without impulsiveness.

interact positively with the people I know and meet so you will learn to relate to others in a positive manner.

reinforce the importance of caring and empathy by caring for and showing empathy toward everyone.

During your middle childhood I will try to . . .

teach you new skills so you will master your surroundings and develop self confidence.

foster your creativity so you will learn to express yourself.

encourage you to always try your best so you will have a sense of pride.

help you accept your strengths and weaknesses so you will forgive yourself and others when you fall short.

model kindness and service toward others so you will learn to be a good citizen and neighbor.

manage my time and uphold appropriate priorities so you will learn to live a balanced, principled life.

correct you as needed so you learn self discipline.

learn from my failures so you will know that failure is an opportunity to grow.

think things through and process those related to your well being with you so you will learn to process things and think critically.

give you the information you need to make informed choices and allow you to learn from the consequences of your actions.

honor diversity so you will learn acceptance and tolerance.

teach you to accept and love your body as it is so you will value yourself as a unique individual.

model flexibility so you will learn to adapt to change.

encourage you to express your disappointment and grieve your losses.

During your preteen years I will try to . . .

value you as a multi dimensional person so you will see the many aspects that make you unique.

encourage you to express your feelings honestly by talking about my feelings openly when appropriate.

set an example of healthy relationships with peers and partners so you will learn to relate well to others.

teach you responsible behavior that preserves your self esteem and promotes your health and safety.

help you learn to care for the changing physical needs of your body.

teach you about your sexuality so you will see yourself as a whole person with natural, healthy sexual instincts.

During your teen years I will try to . . .

offer guidance without dominance so you can practice decision making.

respect your decisions so you can learn from them.

support your rights without taking away the responsibility of your actions.

monitor your choices to teach you to self assess.

foster independence without completely letting go.

allow mutual dependence without dependency.

validate your feelings without questioning them.

encourage your individuality so you can reach your full potential.

trust your judgment knowing that I have taught you well.

LuAnn Pierce is a licensed therapist who has a private counseling center in Columbia. LuAnn has worked with children and families since 1986, including battered women and their children, youth in residential treatment facilities, outpatient mental health centers and a multitude of foster children. She has been instrumental in fostering and mentoring children and teens over the years. LuAnn has a grown foster son who is a military officer and a father himself.