Comparing the Paradigms

Assumption of the Dominant Paradigm:
Parents know best and must be respected at all times. Parents use “power over” to control their children.

Parents are the disciplinarians, using their power to judge their children's behavior as appropriate or inappropriate. Children must obey their parents without questioning - questioning is “talking back”.

Children act out to get attention. If you give children too much attention, you will spoil them and they will manipulate you to get what they want.

Love is to be given conditionally dependent on the child’s behavior. The child earns love by complying to the adult’s wishes. Love is withdrawn when the child is disobedient.

Rules are to be followed without questioning.

Children’s behavior is seen as good or bad. Their intentions are suspect.

Bad behavior is punished, good behavior is praised and rewarded.

Punishing techniques, including fear, shame, guilt, are used to control children's behavior.

Rewards and praise are used when children are deserving, for certain acceptable behaviors.

A child deserves what he or she gets from his/her parents.

Tools of the Dominant Paradigm:
- Conditional Love
- Corporal Punishment - the goal is to create physical pain to teach a lesson. Forms of corporal punishment include a spank, smack, push, pinch, pulling hair or ear, a swat on the head or bottom or hand. When a bruise is left, corporal punishment is considered abuse by law.
- Shaming - Parent’s judge the child’s behavior, opinions, or ideas by saying negative things to the child. This causes emotional pain and undermines the child’s self worth. Shaming includes belittling, humiliating, and comparing the child’s abilities, gender, competency, or age.
- Manipulation - threats, praise, and rewards - taking away something of value for bad behavior and prizes given when the child pleases the adult.

Assumptions of the Nonviolent Paradigm:
Love is unconditional.

Parents are in relationship with their children. The attachment between the child and the parent is fostered through nurturing and validation of the relationship.

Parents use their “power with” to guide, support and teach.
Parents reflect upon the effect of their own childhood experiences on their parenting expectations and limitations. Using self-empathy, parents stay connected to both themselves and their children.

Children are born longing for attention, acceptance, appreciation, affection, and autonomy. Children act from their best intention to communicate their needs, feelings and opinions.

All behavior is a strategy to satisfy an unmet need. Children need guidance to choose strategies that are both safe and respectful to self and others.

Parents are emotional coaches for their children. Parents use an emotional vocabulary to validate their children’s needs and to connect with their experience. Parents act as guides for their children’s emotional literacy, self knowledge and empowerment.

Through empathy, or putting oneself in another’s shoes, parents connect with what is alive for the child in any given moment.

Children’s development is seen in the context of the science of child and brain development. Realistic, age appropriate expectations for behavior are set with an understanding that each child has an internal developmental clock which unfolds on his/her timeline.

A child’s voice is heard and responded to with respect and empathy.

Limits are created to keep children safe, and to teach family values and socialization skills. Parents build a scaffolding of support around children to engage in a process of dialogue to explain these limits. The goal is to foster a child’s ability to internalize ways of being in the world that are respectful and empathetic towards himself/herself and others.

Parents stay connected with their children as they challenge limits. Parents take responsibility for developing a tolerance for children’s protests and strong feelings. When parents have disconnected and expressed anger and frustration in hurtful ways to a child, parent “repair the rupture” through naming what happened and how they imagine the child might have felt.

Parents celebrate children’s successes and mourn their sadness and losses, connection with the meaning of the experience for the child.

Tools of the Nonviolent Paradigm

- Unconditional love - love is given simply because the child exists
- Mindfulness
- Self-reflection - parents think about their own childhood experience
- Parent as the emotional coach Parents resect, model, and name emotions and basic needs
- Developmental information and age appropriate expectations
- Connection communication
- Vision of the future
- OF NEEDS - Observations, Feelings, Needs, Engage, Empathy, Develop Solutions
- Empathy and self empathy
- Repairing ruptures
- Sensory motor tools for regulation
- Nonviolent limits and scaffolding of support
- Celebration and mourning