## Welcoming Environment – School Readiness Components

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### I. The Physical Environment
- Signage to direct visitors from parking lots to the main entrance.
- Welcome signs displayed near the entrance in more than one language, when appropriate.
- Signs giving clear directions from the main entrance to the office are clearly posted near the main entrance.
- A program directory near the main entrance that highlights frequently requested locations.
- Day hours and office hours clearly noted near the main entrance.
- Friendly, clear instructions for all visitors to sign in at the office.
- Bulletin boards that thank volunteers, parents, and community members for their contributions.
- Displays throughout the building are children/family-oriented, colorful, and well maintained.
- Well lit hallways.
- Pictures, photographs, bulletin boards, showcases, and displays reflect the faces of the children and their families, including cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity and a variety of family structures.
- A place where program’s publications are displayed and easily accessible to visitors.
- Clean and orderly restrooms.
II. School/Organization-Wide Practices and Policies

- Is an orientation program provided for families?
- Are information packets provided for new families?
- Are emergency procedures and rules outlined for families at the beginning of each year?
- Do staff call each child’s family early in the program year to invite them to an event or report something positive?
- Are parent-teacher conferences offered at convenient times of the day?
- Are center office hours convenient?
- Do preschool teachers have regular office hours when parents can stop by?
- Do staff and families have informal occasions when they can get to know each other during the year?
- What alternative communication methods are used with parents speaking limited English?
- Is information about classroom policies, program rules, parent-teacher conferences available to parents in their languages?
- Is special attention paid to pronouncing parents’ names correctly?
- Does the center have a file of bilingual speakers who can be called upon to translate or become a “family buddy”?
- Are parent leaders kept informed about program matters and encouraged to form a parent network?
- Are volunteer opportunities available to parents and others in the community?
- Are parents and others in the community invited to use the school/organization for planned events?
- Does the center involve parents in making decisions? Describe.
III. Welcoming Staff

- The office staff greets visitors quickly with a smile and in a friendly, courteous way.
- People who answer the telephone are doing so in a friendly, professional way.
- Prompt attention is given to telephone calls and messages, inviting two-way communication.
- Staff members are patient and helpful towards callers who are limited English speakers.
- Staff members are calm, listen attentively and attempt to solve the problem when an irate parent calls.
- There is a suggestion box where parents and other visitors can contribute ideas.
- Staff members ask visitors if they may be of assistance.
- There are parent and community volunteers in the program office.
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IV. Communication

- All printed materials are clear and understandable to someone who is new to the program.
- The program provides a regular newsletter with information for parents.
- The printed materials are free of educational jargon; acronyms are explained.
- The printed materials use a font that is easy to read, neat and clean.
- Communications are clearly written at the sixth to eighth grade reading level.
- There a way to communicate regularly with non-custodial parents.
- A variety of programs are highlighted, including those on parent education, preschool services, health, etc.
- There is obvious collaboration amongst the program, parent groups and the community.
- Photographs and articles in publications mirror the diversity of the center and community.
- Parent and community volunteers are recognized.
- New families are officially welcomed.
- Articles about staff members, volunteers, children and their families appear in the publications.
- Children’s work (drawings, photographs, poems, etc.) is highlighted in the publications.
IV. Communication (Continued…)

- Educational programs are explained.
- Translated publications are readily available and distributed to families who need them.
- The program’s web site is up to date and its URL address is communicated.
- Hotline messages and voicemail messages are responded to in a timely manner.
- Families can get through to the office when they call and phone calls are returned within 24 hours.
- Families are notified when safety issues arise.
- Staff make available to families resources on parenting and becoming involved in their child’s education.
- Staff make an effort to communicate regularly and positively with parents.