Welcoming Environment – School Readiness
Components

I. The Physical Environment	III. Welcoming Staff
II. School Readiness Program Practices and Policies	IV. Communication

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.

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I. The Physical Environment

III. Welcoming Staff

II. School Readiness Program Practices and Polices

IV. Communication

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.

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Building Partnerships for Student Success

Welcoming Environment-School Readiness
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I. The Physical Environment	**III. Welcoming Staff**
II. School Readiness Program Practices and Polices	IV. Communication

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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Building Partnerships for Student Success

Welcoming Environment – School Readiness
Components

I. The Physical Environment
II. School Readiness Program Practices and Polices

III. Welcoming Staff
IV. Communication

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.

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- 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.

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