



## Practices that Promote Schools as Welcoming Communities

### *At School Efforts:*

- Develop a clear, welcoming school-family partnership policy, publish it for all to see, and post it in an obvious location in the school.
- Display welcome signs in various languages.
- Ensure the school office is friendly and open.
- Organize the school so each child and family is known well by at least one person.
- Provide a full-time parent contact person responsible for connecting parents and educators.
- Post a school map to help visitors find their way around the school building.
- Arrange flowers, murals, children's pictures, and photographs in the main hallways.
- Consider a "family center" or parent room to allow family members to meet formally or informally with each other.
- Have available toys for young children to encourage parents with toddlers and infants to attend school functions.
- Post a welcome sign at the front door or in the school's entrance corridor.
- Arrange for translators for family members who do not speak English.

### *Family Outreach Efforts:*

- Make at least one complimentary phone call to a parent each day.
- Sponsor a regular (e.g., monthly) parents' luncheon for informal social interactions.
- Consider special events for fathers, such as "Significant Male Day" or "Doughnuts for Dad."
- Ask a parent or grandparent to greet other parents at drop-off and pick-up times.
- Develop a friendly and inviting greeting for secretaries.
- Smile.
- Celebrate student successes.
- Invite parents to visit the school or classrooms.
- Use an "open school" policy or designate times when staff is available to talk.
- Host social events and multicultural celebrations.
- Make a home visit to welcome parents, invite them to visit the school, or provide a book as a friendly gesture.
- Ask parents about their needs and provide necessary services.
- Sponsor parent-to-parent communications and events.

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From: Christenson & Sheridan (2001).