

Creating a Family-Friendly Climate

"I feel welcome here... Everything says that we belong, that we are part of the family."

Use this assessment tool to learn whether program staff is employing best practices to welcome families in your program. Are the practices consistent throughout the program? What practices do you use that are not listed here?

Best Practices for Creating a Welcoming Climate for Families	How do you put this into practice?
Photographs of the families of children and program staff are displayed regularly in the facility.	
Adult family members have a comfortable place to sit and be involved with their child and others.	
Magazines and other kinds of parenting information are available to families.	
A welcome sign, in languages spoken by all the families, greets families and visitors.	
The spaces for adults and children are orderly, comfortable, attractive and interesting.	
Program staff greet the adults as well as the children.	
A sense of joy and caring is nurtured in the program and exists among the people in the program.	
The program celebrates small and big accomplishments of adults and children.	
Healthy refreshments (milk, coffee, water) are offered to family members who are visiting, volunteering or filling out forms.	
Adults have safe places to store their coats and personal belongings when they participate at the program.	
Family members (including extended family members) are invited to participate in the program.	
Healthy refreshments and dinner (when appropriate) are provided at events that families attend.	
Younger and older siblings are welcome to come with parents when they are involved in program activities.	
Parents are invited to visit the program at any time that is	

convenient for them.	
Staff are understanding and help with separation issues as parents develop routines for leaving their child in care.	
The program regularly schedules informal times for families to get to know one another.	
The operating hours of the program reflect the needs of families served.	
Staffing schedules and routines support conversations between care givers and family members.	
Staff introduce themselves and nurture their relationships with families.	
Parent contributions of books and materials that reflect all families are solicited and welcomed.	
Staff reach out to parents who are isolated or have low self-esteem and connect them with other families.	
Other:	

Adapted with permission from Participants' Manual: Stronger Together. Family Support and Early Childhood Education (San Rafael, California: Parent Services Project, Inc.), 2006.