

# Checklist

## How Family-Friendly Is Your School?

### WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

1. Friendly signs inside and out welcome families and visitors and explain how to get around the building.  
 Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard
2. The school has standards of welcoming behavior that apply to all staff, including bus drivers, security guards, custodians, and cafeteria works.  
 Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard
3. Front office staff are friendly—recognize visitors right away, providing information easily, and answer the phone in a way that makes people glad they have called.  
 Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard
4. There is a comfortable family resource room stocked with books, games, and educational information that families can borrow and where parents can meet.  
 Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard
5. Current student work is displayed throughout the building. Exhibits clearly explain the purpose of the work and the high standards it is to meet.  
 Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard
6. All programs and activities for families focus on student achievement—they help families understand what their children are learning and promote high standards.  
 Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

7. Special workshops, learning kits, and other activities show families how to help their children at home—and respond to what families say they want to know about.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

8. The school reports to parents about student progress and how teachers, parents, and community members can work together to make improvements.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

### **STRONG RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND FAMILIES**

9. A “joining process” welcomes families to the school, offers tours, makes bilingual speakers available, and introduces them to staff and other families.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

10. Teachers and families have frequent opportunities to meet face-to-face and get to know each other—class meetings, breakfasts, home visits, class observations.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

11. Teachers or advisors make personal contact with each family at least once a month.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

12. A family liaison helps teachers connect to families and bridge barriers of language and culture.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

### **DEVELOPING FAMILIES’**

#### **SELF-CONFIDENCE AND POWER**

13. Families are involved in planning how they would like to be involved at the school.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

14. School committees and the PTA/PTO reflect the diversity of the school community and actively recruit and welcome families from all backgrounds.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

15. The school is open and accessible—it is easy for parents to meet with the principal, talk to teachers and counselors, and bring up issues and concerns.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

16. Parents develop school improvement projects and do action research—survey other families, observe in classrooms, review materials, and visit other schools and programs.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FAMILIES AND STAFF**

17. Families learn how the school system works and how to be an effective advocate for their child.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

18. Teachers learn about effective approaches to working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

19. Families and staff have opportunities to learn together how to collaborate to improve student achievement.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

20. The school reaches out to identify and draw in local community resources that can assist staff and families.

Already doing this     Could do this easily     This will take time     This will be hard

Which areas are you doing well in? Which ones will need more work?

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How are parents involved in making the school open, welcoming, and collaborative?

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What are your concerns?

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**Reflection:** What steps could you take to help your school become more family-friendly?

Right away:

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Over the long term:

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