



## Ten Ways to Welcome Families and Build Strong Relationships

1. Accept families as they are, not as subjects to improve.
2. Get acquainted by making home visits or arranging for families to visit the program.
3. Communicate your program's goals clearly.
4. Ease children's transition into the program by arranging for visits when other children are not present or by arranging the children's attendance for brief periods for the first week or so. Welcome family members to stay with the child for the first several days if they are able to do so, and keep them informed about their child's adjustment when they cannot be there.
5. Respect the child's feelings and need for time to adjust to a new setting. Offer support and reassurance but tailor your attempts to the child's developmental stage and personal preferences.
6. Help children bridge the separation from home by allowing them to bring a favorite toy or blanket. Display photographs of family members where children can see them.
7. Make sure that your program is full of enticing, developmentally appropriate toys and activities that will quickly engage children's interest.
8. Maintain relationships with families by ongoing communication via informal contacts, conferences, group meetings, notes, and newsletters. Take into account differences in home languages and literacy skills among families.
9. Encourage families to broaden their children's home experiences by providing ideas, materials, and information on community resources.
10. Provide information and help families access community resources to meet their needs and to make the transition to the next program smoothly when they leave yours.