



Planning a WELCOME SESSION: A Tip Sheet for Success

Follow this easy schedule and your Welcome Session will be a snap!

1. Recruit Help

- Tap into your Parent Council, Parent Liaison, Kindergarten teachers or others who can provide support. Create a bilingual welcoming committee at your school. Use your student's parents as a resource to your school! Or use your upper grade students. Call Countdown 617-635-6816 if you would like additional support!

2. Maximize Attendance:

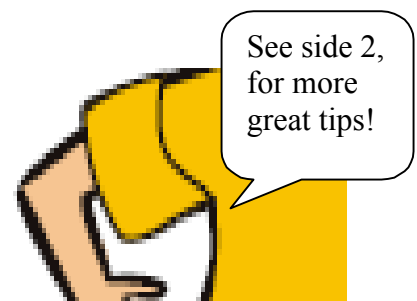
- Schedule your Welcome Session at a convenient time for families
 - Some schools host breakfasts, early-evening pizza parties, or Saturday popsicles at the school playground
- Mail invitations two weeks in advance
- Send an attractive, easy-to-read flyer, letter or post-card invitation. Use the samples in the tool kit or download the samples from My BPS and customize them. (see Tool Kit)
- Follow the written invitation with a phone call one week before event. (see sample in Tool Kit)
 - Ask parent liaisons, school staff or active parents to call new families for you.

3. Make it welcoming

- Enlist the help of volunteers that reflect your schools population to act as greeters.
 - Some schools incorporate older students to be ushers (they may also be used as your bilingual welcoming committee)
- Hang signs or balloons that direct families to the Welcome Session
- Decorate with samples of students' work
- Provide food (even low-cost, low-effort donuts, coffee and juice put people at ease)
- Ask appropriate school staff and volunteers to participate
 - In addition to your kindergarten teacher(s) consider inviting the early childhood coach, school nurse, librarian, literacy specialists, parent liaisons, community partners, or other key personnel.
- Include an opportunity for families to get to know each other
 - Have people introduce themselves and their children and share a point of interest
 - Encourage families to share contact information or to use the playground over the summer this is a great way to ease the transition into your school.

4. Make it informative

- Distribute helpful information, including:
 - Copies of the sample handouts included in the Tool Kit
 - Materials describing your school and curriculum
 - Sample newsletter
 - Free Countdown to Kindergarten book.* (see Tool Kit)
- Give a school tour
- Make a short presentation that includes:
 - Information about curriculum
 - A description of a typical day
 - A discussion of school climate
 - Before- and after-school resources



- Encourage parent involvement give examples of specific ways they can help.
Inform parents of any upcoming school events or fundraisers.
- Be sure to leave plenty of time for questions.
- **New books for distribution at your Welcome Session will be delivered via courier mail to your cluster mailroom.**

5. Make it Fun for Children

- Consider planning a fun, learning activity for children:
 - Some schools do art projects, have circle time or read a story in the library

6. Make it Productive for You

- Please ask families to sign in (**sample sheet in Tool Kit**)
 - Include email and cell phone numbers you can add to your database
- Use volunteers to help you:
 - Set up and clean up
 - Greet and sign-in families (please fax a copy of the form to Countdown, 617-635-9703)
 - Distribute new books to the new kindergarten children

(Tool Kit): *Samples of all items marked with this symbol are available in your Welcome Session Tool Kit. For more information call 617.635.6816.*

Best wishes for a successful event!