Basic Information About Parent Centers

Some school-based parent centers consist of little more than a bookshelf of materials in the waiting room of a school office; others are more elaborate and self-contained, with comfortable seating and coffee at the ready, books and other materials that can be taken or checked out, and a computer, VCR or DVD player available, which visitors can use for informational purposes. Some have no staff, some [parent centers] are run by a changing cast of volunteers, and some have an actual staff member. Minimally, the purpose of such parent centers is to distribute information and to make parents feel welcome at a school or, if the center is located off campus, to make them feel more comfortable with the U.S. education system in general. Ideally, every school would house its own parent center, but given the limited resources of most schools (including time, funding, and space), parent centers are less common than many educators and parents alike would want.