

Marketing your Home Child Care Business

By Cat and Kari

10 Ways to Promote your Business

10. Develop a web site for your childcare. Use today's technology to advertise to the world. List your hours of operation, policies, day care forms, menus, monthly newsletters, pictures of your environment, the list can go on. If you are not internet savvy, hire someone to do it for you. Your local internet provider usually will offer free web space and easy-to-use web building programs.
9. Advertise in your local newspaper. This can be an expensive, but often times newspapers offer special deals on certain days of the week.
8. Create unique t-shirts/sweatshirts with your business name for yourself and daycare children. Wear them on field trips or outings to the park!
7. Display a sign in a window or in your yard with your business name and phone number.
6. Create business cards. Include cute children graphics, your business name, and address, phone number. Carry them with you; you never know when you might need them.
5. Post signs in your local library, grocery store, church, and elementary schools. Anywhere parents might see your sign. Include tabs people can take with them with your phone number and name.
4. Register with your local child care resource agency. They are an invaluable resource for you and can direct you to
3. Create a catchy name for your business. Parents tend to remember a cute business name over a provider's last name.
2. Network with other providers. This not only provides support for you, but a chance to discuss openings, problems you may be having, and policies/practices you might want to incorporate into your own business.
1. Word of Mouth is your best way to advertise. Tell everyone you know that you are in the childcare business.

Create a phone call information sheet so you can easily document write the potential client's information and needs. First impressions are critical. A cheerful and professional tone is helpful. If you are busy with the children, take a message and return the call when you are able to focus on the conversation.

Create a personal interview book that may include photos, credentials, resume, training information, sample communication methods i.e. newsletters, calendars, notes.

Create a brochure to send prospective clients following the initial phone contact.

Develop and/or refresh interviewing techniques. Practice on friends or family members until you are prepared and comfortable.

Develop professional documents i.e. your policy and contract. If you are not enrolling families following interviews maybe you need to take another look.

Always be ready to fill an opening! Have interview and enrollment materials ready to go and easily accessible.

Market your business year round – even if you are full. That's the way to stay full!

Maintain the exterior of your home and yard ... an attractive first appearance is so important and shouldn't be overlooked.

Take a fresh look at your environment, toys and equipment. Is everything clean, in good shape, safe, and age appropriate to the age child want to enroll?

Look at yourself, your business, your home and even your family from a parent's perspective ... they need to make the best decision possible for the care of their child.

Look at ways that your business is unique – there are 500 providers in our county alone – why should a parent choose you? Do you offer special activities, field trips, small group size, learning opportunities, newsletters, calendars, parties, current CPR and/or first aid, experienced provider, what ages do you care for, special needs experiences, continuing education/training you have, days and hours you are open, area of town/community, etc. You need to promote yourself!

Network, network, networks ... with providers in your neighborhood, providers in your local child care association, providers at conferences and trainings, neighbors, friends, current families, past families. Parents often ask trusted people for recommendations.

Take pictures of the children doing art, playing, dancing - having a good time in your home. Send to parent's place of employment for them to enjoy and share with co-workers.

Offer referral incentives to your current families. Some examples might be a free day/week of care if they refer 1-3 families you accept into your childcare, thank you bouquet of flowers, or a box of homemade cookies.

Frame and display your childcare license and certificates for trainings.

Taken from a posting on a Parent's Place board on family childcare -

Note: Not all parents have all of these views/opinions.

"Here is a list of reasons some parents have given to CCRR for not choosing a specific daycare. I thought this was interesting since we have all had parents come see our centre then not hear from them again. I just thought some people here would find this interesting as well."

- The provider is more interested in the money rather than the children
- The children are not offered a wide variety of activities and/or toys
- The house or yard is poorly maintained and/or cluttered
- The children are required to stay in one small area of the home
- The children are not allowed on the furniture
- The parent feels the provider cares for too many children
- The house smells of cigarette smoke
- The provider does not present himself or herself in a professional manner
- Family pets are not properly restrained or controlled
- The provider has an unfriendly telephone manner
- The provider carried on a phone conversation with the children crying in the background
- The provider lives near a busy street and does not have a fenced yard
- The provider uses inappropriate language around the children-broken toys or other dangerous items are laying around
- The cleanliness of the provider and children in care do not meet the standards of the parent
- The provider does not acknowledge the children during the interview - the inside of the home is dark and dreary
- The contract and policies are not professionally written
- The children are left alone outside
- Toys are not visible during the interview

- The provider has too many rules for young children
- The provider seems inflexible with behavioral management techniques, toilet learning schedules, napping schedules, etc-the parents are not allowed to make announced visits during child care hours-other kids in the providers care are dirty during the interview
- There are not child friendly pictures or children's artwork on the walls
- The provider's family does not seem to be supportive of the childcare business.

Updated March 2008 kf