

51 Tips for Making a Great Daycare

Operating a daycare can be very rewarding. This ebook is designed to give you some great ideas and tips on how to make your daycare center the best on the block.

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Allan Wilson is an online marketing veteran widely considered for many years as the 'Resale Rights' expert. Allan also provides a lot of different membership options at...

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WHAT PARENTS LOOK FOR

This first set of tips will talk a little bit about what parents look for in a daycare center.

1. Competitive

It's important to understand that the daycare business is very competitive business. Parents are looking for the absolute best for their child, and it's your job to provide that.

2. Respect

Parents expect respect for both themselves and their children. Start with a respectful attitude from the moment you meet, and you'll find it goes a long way.

3. Positive

A positive attitude can go a long way with both parents and children. No matter what problems arise, stay positive, and sure that you can remedy even the toughest situations.

4. Staff to Child Ratio

One of the most important issues for a parent is the staff to child ratio. Make sure you're not only complying with the licensing laws, but also the expectations of parents.

5. Values

Parents look for daycare centers that teach good values to their children. Make sure you let parents know what values are being taught and carried out in your classroom.

6. Positive Discipline

One of the most important questions parents will ask you is how you handle discipline. Make sure you have a clear, positive way to deal with children, and explain this to parents.

7. Licensing and Accreditation

Make sure your daycare license is current and displayed where parents can see. Also, display any accreditations or special awards your daycare has received.

8. Experienced Teachers

Parents will ask about all of your teachers and assistants. Make sure everyone working in your daycare center has adequate (or more than adequate) education and experience.

9. Clean

Make sure your daycare center is clean. This is the first thing parents will notice, and it will make a lasting impact. Don't forget smells. Nothing is worse than a center that smells like a dirty diaper.

10. Rules

Parents will ask about the rules of your daycare. Make sure that you have a copy of these rules for them to take. It's also a good idea to post these rules in several different places throughout your daycare center.

11. Schedule

It's important to have a daily schedule. It shows professionalism and good preparation. It's also a good idea to have the schedule posted so that parents can see it.

12. First Impression

Parents pay close attention to the first impression that you make, especially on their child. Here are some things that you can do when they first come in:

- Have fun, lively music going
- Greet them by their name
- Get down on their level
- Have an activity for them to start right away

13. Relating to Their Child

Parents will watch you closely to see how you interact with their child. Make sure and not just love their child, but listen and get to know them as well.

14. Security

Parents will want to make sure that your daycare center is secure. Make sure that all doors are child-proof. There should only be one door that visitors can come and go through, and that door needs to be monitored at all times.

15. Tuition

One of the first questions that parents will ask is what you charge for tuition. Make sure and do your research so that your tuition is competitive and fair. It's also a good idea to set specific fees for things like late payments, and picking children up late.



SAFETY

Safety is very important when running a daycare. This next set of tips will list some important safety measures to take in your center.

16. Fire Drills

Having a fire escape plan and regular fire drills are essential in any daycare business. Here are some other things to consider:

- Fire alarms
- Smoke detectors
- Fire retardant sleep mats
- Regular fire safety lessons for kids

17. Safe Furniture

Make sure that all of the furniture in your center is safe and child friendly. Check for sharp edges, loose pieces, and durability. Your local hardware store will have lots of ideas on how to make unsafe furniture safe.

18. Emergency Bag

Keep an emergency backpack near the door to grab if there is a fire or other emergency. Things to keep in the bag:

- Bottled water
- Crackers or some other easily stored snack
- First aid kit
- Cell phone
- Phone numbers of children
- Wet wipes
- Diapers
- Blankets

19. Toys

When choosing toys, make sure that they're safe for the kids in your daycare. Check for small parts that could be choking hazards. Keep them clean by disinfecting them several times a day.

20. Ventilation

Make sure your daycare center has plenty of ventilation. Especially if you're in a basement, an airflow system is very important. Talk to your local fire department for ventilation ideas.

21. Food

Food is important for all daycare centers. Make sure and have a menu of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Keep this menu posted, and make it available to parents as well.

22. Teaching Good Habits

Parents want to know that you are teaching their children good habits. Here are some that you can teach daily:

- Manners
- Cleaning up
- Sharing
- Listening



RECORDS

Keeping accurate records is vital to every daycare center. This next set of tips will talk about the kinds of records to keep.

23. Child Records

When signing a child up to attend your school, start a file on them. Have a form for the parents to fill out that tells all the vital information about their child. Keep these records organized, and in an assessable area.

24. Check In/Check Out

Have a system that you can use to check the children in and out. This can be a simple clipboard, as complex as a computer program.

25. Food Record

As mentioned earlier, a printed menu is a great idea to have available for parents. Another idea is to have a menu printed out in each child's file, then write down what their child ate that day.

26. Child Journal

Make up a journal for each child, and spend some time every day talking about what they did that day. Chances are they can't write yet, so either have them draw pictures, or dictate to you while you write for them.

27. Scrapbook

Parents love seeing pictures of their kids. Keep a camera handy and snap fun pictures of them throughout the year, and put them in a scrapbook. Try to update this scrapbook weekly or monthly and keep it by the door so parents can look at it when they come in.



COMMUNITY

It's important to the success of your daycare business to be community-aware. This next set of tips will give you some ideas on how to be involved with your community.

28. Fundraisers

Try and hold a fundraiser at least once a year. Get the kids and their parents involved. This shows everyone that you love your community, and it tells parents that you'll try your best to keep their costs down.

29. Grants

Research the grants available to you, and apply for as many as possible. Get parents involved, and make available what you're applying for, and how it'll effect your daycare *and* your community.

30. Awareness

Do all that you can to raise awareness of your daycare. Here are some ideas:

- Advertise in local papers
- Have booths at local fairs
- Offer a referral program
- Flyers

31. Encourage Volunteers

As a child care business owner, volunteers are crucial. Make sure to encourage parents to volunteer. Another good idea is to ask if you have a foster grandparent program in your area.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Probably the most important thing about your daycare is what happens in your classroom. This next set of tips will list some things you can have and do in your class to make sure the children have a great experience.

32. Curriculum

It's important to develop and carry out a great curriculum. Plan at least one month in advance, and post it and or print it out for the parents.

33. Rotate Toys

Always be on the lookout for new and used toys. If you have a good storage room, keep the extra toys there, then rotate them every few weeks.

34. Accommodate Children with Disabilities

Be sure to accommodate children with disabilities. If you have a student with disabilities, it's important to sit down with his parents and discuss how to meet those needs.

35. Books

Books are very important in a daycare center. Books teach all sorts of great things to kids. Visit your local library and borrow new books often.

36. Circle Time

At several points during the day, plan “circle time” activities. This is where you gather the children together on the floor and tell stories, play games, or sing songs. These circle time should be short and exciting.

37. Music

Children respond to music very well. Have fun, upbeat music playing when they get dropped off and picked up to make the transition smoother. You can also play specific songs throughout the day to encourage and teach them.

38. Dancing

Dancing is a wonderful way for children to express themselves. Play different styles of music, and encourage them to dance however the music makes them feel.

39. Singing

Children love to sing. Make sure at your daycare center that you sing classic songs that the kids already know, as well as teach new songs.

40. Germ Prevention

It can be hard to prevent germs at a daycare, but here are some things that you can do:

- Keep several boxes of tissues throughout the room.
- Keep hand sanitizer in all areas of the center.
- Teach proper hand-washing skills.
- Spray the toys with child safe disinfectant throughout the day.

41. Arts and Crafts

Arts and crafts are another great way for children to express themselves. Have an arts activity planned everyday, but let the kids be creative.

42. Display Children's Creations

After creating artwork, make sure and display them throughout the room. A fun idea is to hang strings from the ceiling with paper clips on the end. You can then put up different creations every day.

43. Sensory Table

It's a good idea to have a sensory table in your daycare center. Here are some fun things to put in it:

- Dirt
- Water
- Salt
- Sand
- Jell-o



DEALING WITH PARENTS

Dealing with parents isn't always easy, but it's important to running a good daycare center. This next set of tips will list a few important principles to keep in mind.

44. Be Confident

Parents look for someone who is sure of themselves to take care of their children. Even if it's your first week on the job, show confidence, and let parents know that you'll take extra good care of their child.

45. Be Firm

Be firm with parents. When discussing fees and rules, stay calm yet firm. This works for your expectations of the children *and* parents.

46. Be Informative

Parents love teachers who are informative. Give them updates of how their child is doing, as well as plans for future activities.

47. Be Available

It's important to be available to parents. Make sure and have answers to questions parents may have, and have office hours for parents to call or come in and talk to you when they need to.



OTHER TIPS

This last set of tips will give you a few more ideas for making your daycare center the best in the neighborhood.

48. Play Clothes

Make sure to tell the parents to send their children in play clothes. Keep smocks available for the kids for painting and other messy activities. If you don't have smocks, bring in some old t-shirts.

49. Field Trips

Plan a couple of field trips for throughout the year. Make sure to have the proper permission slips. Ask for volunteers to help on the field trips.

50. Ongoing Training

It's a good idea to provide ongoing training to your staff. This will add credibility to your center, and ensure that the children in your daycare receive the best care possible.

51. Outdoors

Make sure and incorporate some outdoor playtime into your daily curriculum. Even in bad weather, it's important that the children experience outdoor fun. In cold weather, dress them warmly, and build snowmen.