Rebuild Your ECE Program for the New Normal

PART 2:
BUSINESS PRACTICES
STAFFING & ENROLLMENT

Lauren M. Small, MBA

Our Company

What We Do:
• Business Management Training Programs
• Business Consulting
• Technology Implementation
• Train-the-Trainer for Communities

Part 2: Staffing & Marketing

Agenda
• Business Practices
• Staffing
• Recruitment
• Retention
• Marketing Tools
• Organizational Tips
What has changed with COVID-19?

- Staff & parent fear
- Extreme uncertainty
- Increased requirements for providers
- Teacher shortage
- Lower enrollment
- Less face-to-face

Sound Business Decisions

Driven by Fear  Follow a Process

Strategic planning process:
1. Establish a goal
2. Gather information, research, discuss, plan
3. Understand the financial implications of each scenario
4. Make informed decisions, best way forward

Put on Your Business Hat!
The Systems Mindset
Standardizing Key Business Activities

Documented BEST PRACTICES
- Handbooks
- Policies/Procedures Manual
- Management Binder
- Operations Manual
- By-Laws

Communication (in COVID era)
- Communicate well & often
- Confident, consistent, fact-based language
- Update documented procedures
- Keep sharing positive things happening at the center
- Be a trusted resource
- Update families on how you’re keeping up with health requirements and staff training on best practices
- Implement a process to keep communication technology up-to-date
POLL QUESTION

HR Management Systems

The smaller the organization, the more important the hiring.
John Maxwell
What Tools Support Your Process?

- Hiring Procedures
- Online Ad Platform
- Job Advertisement
- Job Descriptions
- Interview Questions
- Candidate Rating Tool
- Employment Forms

Job Description

ATTRIBUTES NEEDED

- Customer Service
- Parent Interaction
- Child Interaction & Trust
- Initiative
- Technical Knowledge
- Teamwork & Collaboration
- Communication Verbal & Written
- Reliability

Interview Techniques

- Pre-Interview Screening
- Behavioral Based Interview Questions
- Use The Same Questions For Everyone
- Adjust Observational Interview
- Virtual Panel Interviews
  - Zoom
  - Facetime
  - Google Meet
  - Microsoft Teams
“We often lose potentially great staff, not only because of inadequate wages, but because we throw them into a deep Olympic-size pool without giving them carefully fitted goggles and a clear life-support system. How can they become long-distance swimmers if our orientation and staff development is focused only on treading water?”

Margie Carter

Support Tools

On-Boarding
- Policies & Procedures
- Job Description
- Orientation Plan & Schedule
- Ability to Demonstrate Understanding
- Adult Learning
- Mentor Role

POLL QUESTION
Back to Marketing Basics

- COVID an opportunity to rebuild where weak before
- Create solid foundation of branding
- New normal means new message focus (What do parents want to hear?)

Messaging (in COVID era)

Program changes must be communicated! Think of places you need to update your website:

- Hours of operation
- Health & safety practices
- Class ratios
- Dropoff/pickup procedures
- Some programs doing a popup with COVID measures

GOAL IS TO REDUCE PARENT FEAR/HESITATION

PIVOT Strategy

Evaluate → Research → Plan → Execute
Back to Marketing Basics

- Top-Quality Service
- Branding
- Signage
- Virtual Tours
- Strong Online Presence
- Testimonials
- Parent Engagement
Have Strong Online Presence!

- **Website** optimized for search engines (make sure any web person you hire mentions “SEO” in their services)
- **Google My Business** page completely filled out (first must “claim” the listing)
- **Social Media**: Facebook #1, Instagram also good
- **Other Business Listings**: Claim your business and regularly check/answer reviews

Your Website

- Top marketing tool
- Online tour (key in COVID!)
- Show expertise in child development
- CAN be parent communication tool (majority of website visitors will be prospective parents… newsletters and emails better for reaching current parents.

- Avoid DIY websites… this is a place to invest in a professional!

The Virtual Tour

- Showcases best features
- Can be photo gallery, video, or interactive tour (hire professional)
- Can be done with or without people in it
- Captions help point out benefits (“Play mat where our infants get tummy time 3 times per day”)
Maximizing Business Listings

- Easy to copy/paste your business details
- Keep these up to date!
- Set a weekly reminder to check for new reviews (Google usually emails you when you get a new review though)
- ANSWER ALL REVIEWS!

Testimonials

- New Word of Mouth
- Website, Facebook, Google, Yelp
- Vital to Your Online Presence
- ASK!
- What if You Get a Bad Review?

Google for Business

- Happy Child Care Center
  - 4.7 stars (20) - Day care center
  - Anywhere, USA
  - (213) 222-0250
  - Website Directions

- Great Starts Child Care
  - 3.2 stars (7) - Day care center
  - Anywhere, USA
  - Open - Closes 6PM - (213) 442-4422
  - Website Directions

- Loveable Childcare & Preschool
  - 3.6 stars (20) - Day care center
  - Anywhere, USA
  - (213) 672-0103
  - Website Directions
Social Media

- Focus on Facebook & Instagram
- Post at least once a week
- Mix of center-happenings, links to parenting articles, reminders
- Include visual with every post
- Photo release
- Best times of day to post (you can pre-schedule it):
  - 6-7:30 a.m.
  - 12-1 p.m.
  - 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Website Photo Tips

- Use good lighting – no dark images or shadows
- Avoid backgrounds like Dumpsters, parked cars…
- Capture the Children
  - Interacting with happy teachers (Posed & Candid)
  - Show diversity in age, gender and race
  - Represent each age group
- Don’t forget the Building
  - Storefront - wide view from street & closer view
  - Sign in front of building
  - Unique center features
  - Outdoor photos, showing playground space…
Organizational Tips

Must haves for busy owners/directors

- Calendar (Digital/Paper)
- Center Master Checklist
- Childcare Management System
- Task List/Project Management Tool
- Cloud or Backed Up File Management
- Master Password System
- Parent/Staff Communication Platform

Role of Automation

- Determine your need
- Eliminate time-consuming manual
- Evaluate software
- Set a timeline
- Develop implementation plan

Resources

- McCormick Institute Early Childhood Leadership at [http://www.mccormickcenter.nl.edu/](http://www.mccormickcenter.nl.edu/)
- “The Right Fit, Recruiting, Selecting and Orienting Staff” by Kay Albrecht
- “Program Administration Scale, Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management,” by Teri N. Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom
- “Employee Turnover” by Marcy Whitebook
- ChildCare Aware [https://www.childcareaware.org/resources/map/](https://www.childcareaware.org/resources/map/)
- Director Networking Groups