



# First Impressions

## 5.5 insider nursery tips to impress potential parents

Consider sharing this document with anyone who talks to your customers on your behalf

In your nursery, you've worked hard to create a safe and stimulating environment for children. However, have you re-considered the impression you're making on new parents recently?

For many parents looking for childcare, this is the first time they've left their child. It's a major life transition not only for the children, but also for them. When visiting nurseries, parents are often nervous or experiencing some level of guilt and separation anxiety. They want to be assured they're making the right decision.

On average, parents visit three different nurseries before making a decision on which setting is best for their child. That's why it's important that you are doing everything you can to make lasting, positive impressions that instil confidence in parents. Everyone's goal should be to ease the transition for both children and parents, alleviating any worries they may have.

As you look to increase occupancy at your nursery, consider the following tips to make a good first impression with new parents:

## 1. Coach staff on how to present themselves to parents

We all look for staff who put children before business, but make sure they are confident presenting to parents, after all, they are representing your brand.

You can train staff on how to present themselves to parents. Teach them how to make a positive first impression that provides parents with the confidence that they're making the right decision for their child. All staff should be happy and accommodating in conversations with parents, making eye contact and concentrating on the questions they are being asked. This may require some practice by going through common questions that parents often ask and rehearsing the answers until they are comfortable.

Remember that any staff member who passes a parent should smile and say hello. Parents know that happy staff means happy children!



Eye contact and a smile from a member of staff speaks volumes about your nursery

## 2. Show how safe, healthy and secure your nursery is

Knowing that their child is cared for in a secure, nurturing environment is just as important to parents as it is to you. Demonstrate that your nursery is clean and sanitary, and that you're following the basic rules of safety when it comes to toys, bedding and any potentially hazardous situations. Little touches, like asking parents to cover their shoes with foot protectors, can show how seriously you take hygiene.

Consider how your front door security feels on a first visit. Parents want to feel their child is in a secure environment, where no one can enter the building that isn't approved. However, this usually means that parents must ring a bell or buzzer at a gate to enter the building, which can feel cold and unwelcoming.

Consider printing a clear explanation of how you answer the door, explain why it is necessary, and ensure that once they are inside, they experience the warmth of your environment.

### 3. Inspire the right values in your staff

Most nurseries have a uniform, and any staff member who is wearing a uniform is representing your business. They should be aware that as such, they are your brand ambassadors and parents will judge the standards of care by their actions. You could suggest that staff members cover their uniforms while outside, particularly when smoking.

Your role is to instil the values of the nursery, creating a positive, enthusiastic work environment. This is best achieved through consistency and encouraging everyone to carry out the values and rules of the nursery. A great idea is to put together a list of values and discuss them openly with individual team members. You could even display these values in the nursery or online for parents to see.



It's very easy to overlook the things that you see everyday.

Try to take a fresh look at your nursery with a new parent's point of view



In many people's eyes, an out of date website is worse than not having a website at all

## 4. First impressions are usually online

The reality of the web today, is that you are rarely present when your business makes its first impression on a new prospective customer. Nearly 80% of parents will conduct a web search to identify the three nurseries they plan to visit.

A non-existent website, or one with links that don't work properly, does not portray the best impression of the business. Ideally, from the first glance to the last click, your nursery website should be warm and full of life. Look online at other nurseries in your area. See what they are doing and how they are making first impressions. The same culture you create for your childcare centre should be reflected on your website.

Consider what you want parents to do as a result of visiting your website. Is the user journey clear, inviting parents to email, call you with any questions or to set up an appointment?

Remember to highlight what makes you special and ask existing parents to provide testimonials that you can publish.

## 5. Always consider parent engagement

Parents are usually very anxious placing their child in someone else's care, so it is important to consider parent engagement throughout the entire enquiry process.

If you had the choice of not knowing what happens with your child during the day, and a feeling of disconnect from your child's daily life in childcare, versus feeling engaged with what's going on in your child's life at the nursery, which would you pick?

Your nursery should be taking advantage of technology to connect with parents and keep them up to date with all the daily events that their child is experiencing while at your setting.

Parents who have to work during the early years of their child's lives want reassurance that the nursery is safe and experience nothing but positive impressions. You know you've done everything to make your nursery the very best environment possible, now it's time to make sure this is portrayed to parents.

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## 5 1/2 . How do you know what needs improving?

Consider a questionnaire for those that book a place at your setting (and maybe those that don't) to capture their experiences from showrounds at yours, and other nurseries.

Making it anonymous might deliver more candid feedback.

## Parenta can help create positive first impressions of your nursery

### Websites

Our aim is for your nursery to look as fantastic online as it does in real life. Having a web presence is essential as more and more people start their searches for local businesses online, but building a website can be tricky and time-consuming. As part of our commitment to improving the business of childcare, we can build small, free websites or custom ones with more content.

### Training you and your staff

A nursery is only as good as the people who run it. Allowing you and your staff the opportunity to develop their skills is essential to giving children a strong start in life, and keeping your nursery successful. Whether you're looking to train your staff or take a management course yourself, Parenta can deliver qualifications and help you to find funding.

### Nursery management software

At Parenta, we understand the pressures of running a nursery. We've spent time developing software that relieves the pressures of admin by helping with tasks such as invoicing, staff management and free entitlement. We ask for feedback from our users at every step of the way, to make sure our nursery systems meet your requirements.

### Sharing daily activities with parents through Dayshare

Parents love to know how their children are getting on at nursery. Dayshare, our exclusive tablet-based application, allows you to strengthen that connection, while also helping to meet your Ofsted requirements

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To learn more about creating positive impressions for potential parents and how to help your business grow, call **0844 504 5504** or [visit our website](#) to find out more about how Parenta can help you promote and manage your business.

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