



# Child Care Enrollment Tool Kit

The economy in Michigan is facing some challenges, which can result in child care enrollment being lower than usual. You can make a difference by treating your program as a competitive business and taking advantage of the techniques that other businesses use to increase the number of their clients. Also, improving the overall quality of your program can help to keep your enrollment up.

## BUSINESS TIPS

Review the list below and identify the suggestions you can implement to improve your program's quality:

- Professionalism is very important when running your own business. Communication with families should be done in a professional manner. Your outgoing voicemail message should include information like your name, business name, hours of operation, and/or phone number so parents know they have reached you when they call.
- When you receive a voicemail message, listen to it thoroughly before calling the number back. Address the individual by name and state who you are when returning a call. An example of a professional way to return a business call is to say, "This is Jane Smith, returning a call to Mrs. Jones regarding child care."
- Include your name, and/or business name, in your e-mail address that is used for business purposes. Don't include nicknames or inappropriate words. Here are a few examples of business e-mail addresses: janesmith@email.com, smithsdaycare@email.com, jsmith123@email.com.
- Keep your child care license active and post it where families can see it. Frequently review the Michigan child care licensing rules and statutes and make sure your program meets the requirements. View them online by visiting [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare) and clicking on **Rules and Statutes** under "Information for Providers."
- Update your brochures with current hours of operation, rates, and program activities and distribute them in your community. Be sure to include your license ID number.
- Keep detailed records for the children in your care including emergency contact information, birthdates, health information (food/other allergies), photos of people who will be picking up/dropping off the child, etc. For all required information view the licensing rule **R 400.1907 Children's records** for family/group homes or licensing rule **R 400.5111 Children's records** for centers.
- Develop, and put in writing, policies for discipline, emergencies, and sick/vacation time (for both the provider and the children).
- Arrange for a back-up care provider in case you are sick, have an emergency, or go on vacation.
- Obtain contact information from prospective clients. Follow up with them after they visit your program to answer any questions or address any concerns they may have.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TIPS

“(Quality) programs or providers offer engaging, appropriate activities in settings that facilitate healthy growth and development, and prepare children for or promote their success in school.”

*\*definition from NACCRRRA, the National Association of Resource and Referral Agencies*

By improving the quality of your program, you will be more competitive in the market and your program will have a positive effect on the growth of the children in your care. Below are some tips.

- Use positive guidance techniques. Child Care Network has many resources available on appropriate guidance and discipline.
- Have a plan in place in case of emergencies – first aid kits, disaster plans, and responses to a medical emergency or lost child.
- Participate in quality early childhood professional development workshops and classes. Child Care Network offers a variety of topics to choose from.
- Provide nutritious meals and snacks for the children. Consider enrolling in the federal child care food program, which could supplement your cost of food. Visit [www.michigan.gov/cacfp](http://www.michigan.gov/cacfp) for more information on food programs in your area.
- Provide age appropriate materials and maintain consistent daily routines for the children. For resources visit our CCN lending library. You can view our resource list online by visiting [www.childcarenetwork.org](http://www.childcarenetwork.org), in the drop down menu under Child Care Professionals choose **Provider Services**, and in the lending library information click on **View a complete list of resources available**. Also, visit [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare) and underneath “Information for Providers” click on **Resources**.
- Keep your CPR and first aid certification current and keep certification cards handy to show to prospective clients. For approved CPR/first aid instructors visit [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare), underneath “Information for Providers” click on **Training**, then click **CPR and First Aid Training**.
- Take safety precautions: installing smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and outlet covers, get a first aid kit, prepare an emergency escape route, and have your playground inspected. Discuss the safety measures you have taken with prospective and current clients.
- Always keep your vacancies and program details (i.e. hours of operation, rates, activities, transportation, etc.) up to date with Child Care Network so we can give parents the most accurate information about your program when providing them with referrals.
- Having successful relationships with the families you currently serve can make a major impact on your program’s success. When families have a positive experience at your program and compliment you, be sure to ask if you can use them as a reference. Keep your personal references up to date, and on hand, to give to prospective clients.
- Curbside Appeal. First impressions can make a big difference! Every parent that drives by is a potential customer. Make sure your outdoors is as inviting as the indoors. Ask a family member, friend or current client for feedback. When approaching your home or center, is the initial sight attractive? Do you have neatly trimmed gardens or is your yard overgrown? Are there any obvious safety concerns –tools, grills, clutter? In your play area, do you have appealing items for children of all ages – sandbox, swings, children’s garden area? Curbside appeal is important to your clients (customers), whether it is the initial impression as they approach your home (or center) or as they first view your facilities both inside and out.

Remember, you are an early childhood professional! You and the families enrolled in your program are partnering to raise the next generation of Michigan parents and workers. Your child care experience and skills make a difference in the lives of children every day!

Please call us if you have questions, or need help implementing the above suggestions. We are happy to help you generate new ideas and refer you to other services that may be able to help you as well. Information and resources can be found in our Resource Library.

**800-777-2861** [www.childcarenetwork.org](http://www.childcarenetwork.org)