

The Connector

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Summer 2010

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Coordinator's Message



Happy Summer Greetings!

It is so nice to feel the first warming rays of sunshine and to truly know that summer is here. I hope you enjoy this edition. I think we have managed to include a little something for everyone!

I have given you a sneak peek into our training line-up for the fall. We will be hosting a combination of workshops and courses for those of you who either "have a little or have a lot" of time to give towards lifelong learning.

We are most pleased to welcome Danielle Dzioba to our team. Danielle brings her fresh knowledge and enthusiasm to the reception duties. She's a quick study and she's eager to assist you. Welcome, Danielle!

We included a rather lengthy article pertaining to the marketing of your child care centre. Although it has a home-based focus, I believe that plenty of the key points could be contemplated for a larger child care setting. I think summer is a great time to set goals, do some tidying-up of your files, and even review how well your contract is working. Try a few of the ideas from the article. Let us know about your successes and we can feature them in our autumn or winter newsletter!

We were so pleased to have such beautiful photos and feedback from the team at Saxe Point Daycare who participated with rearing Painted Lady Butterfly larvae this year. We love to have articles and ideas generated from you, our membership. It is heartwarming to know that when we brainstorm as a team about what would be useful for your practice, that it is such a hit with your children and you!

Please note our back page! We have been negligent over the past year (!) with ensuring that all new members were noted in our newsletter. We hope that we have captured everyone!

And lastly, please be on the look out for our **Wage & Benefits Survey**. This is a most useful document to share with child care centres and board members of non-profit settings when they are reviewing wages and salaries for their staff. Please take time to complete and return it to Shauna.

Most sincerely,

Belinda Macey

Program Coordinator



Office Hours

Monday to Friday

8:30am - 4:00pm

Wednesdays

12:00pm - 7:00pm

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Important Dates

June 21: National Aboriginal Day & Summer Begins

June 29: School's Out!

July 1: Canada Day (Office Closed)

July 16: CCRR Workshop Launch

August 2: Civic Holiday (Office Closed)

August 12: First of Ramadan

September 6: Labor Day (Office Closed)

September 7: Back to School!

September 9: Rosh Hashanah

September 12: Grandparents' Day

September 18: Yom Kippur



Fall Training

We have been very busy as a team planning and preparing for the upcoming training year. We have welcomed and appreciated your feedback over the past two years about the enrollment process and the variety of workshops and courses we have offered. We will continue to value what you have to say in order to improve our services.

Firstly, we heard that it is problematic for care providers to plan so far in advance for our training events. What we will be doing this year is launching the workshop and course offerings in two releases:

July 16: workshops for September and October 2010

November 19: workshops for January and February 2011

We found that care providers only accessed training during these peak four months of the year. In the autumn as we approach the holiday season typically there was very little interest in doing any training in November and December.

In the new year we found people were ready for training and fresh ideas in the first two months and then interest petered out in the spring. We learned too that May is a very busy month for training because the Making Tomorrow Conference and the ECEBC Conference are both featured.

Our program will continue to partner with other agencies to assist financially with their training ventures. We do place some conditions on the funding we supply. We ask that they provide opportunities for "our membership" to attend, as well as provide documentation about the event, attendance, and outcomes.

We will be offering the Canadian Child Care Federation's **Family Child Care Training** in September. This is an eight week course beginning on Wednesday, September 22, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Our target group is our License-not-Required providers. We do provide opportunities for people who are going to be Licensed Family Child Care to attend. The cost will be \$100.00.

Every autumn we offer a tax workshop so that you can prepare your files for the upcoming tax season. We will also have a representative from the Child Care Subsidy office talk about the process for yourself and the parents in your care to process the subsidy forms.

Stay tuned for the mid July launch to see our exciting offerings!

Laminator

Our laminator has been experiencing some growing pains of late! We can only laminate paper, posters, or card stock items. We cannot laminate any posters or items that have "raised" pieces that are glued onto the surface. Also, the laminate film will not adhere to tempera painted items.

Please ensure that you have all of your items "prepped" when you drop them off to be laminated; we cannot "punch out" items for you.

Welcome!

Hi, my name is Danielle and I am the new receptionist at the Victoria CCR. I recently graduated from Camosun's Office Administration Program and I am excited to put my skills to use! Outside of work I enjoy practicing yoga, reading, and driving about in my little '92 Miata! I look forward to assisting you in any way that I can!

Sincerely,

Danielle Dzioba



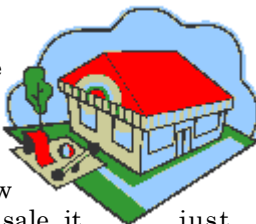
Marketing

Extreme Makeover Child Care Edition

“Developing a Marketing Plan for Your Child Care”

By Vicki Piir

If you're like me, you are completely hooked on those reality TV make over programs. Whether it's seeing someone reinvent themselves for a new career or improving their home for sale, it just gives you a good feeling to see something revitalized.



In the child care field, as in our personal lives, we continue day after day, often year after year, in the same spaces with the same furnishings and even the same arrangement. What was a good design 10, 15 or even 20 years ago we think is still good enough today right? The fact is we become “comfortable” and even a little complacent with our surroundings. Don't misunderstand me—if you are content with yourself or your home the way it is, there is no need to change. However, if you happen to be operating a business like child care and are in need of new clientele becoming complacent will definitely put you at a disadvantage in the marketplace. Most people think that marketing begins by placing a classified ad. However, placing the ad is actually the final step in a carefully conceived plan designed to make your business a success. This article is meant to inform child care businesses starting out as well as those businesses which have been operating under the premise that what worked 10 years ago will continue to work today.

Last time I checked my calendar we were coming to the close of the first decade of the new millennium. That's right, the new millennium and with it a new era in providing and marketing your childcare. Parents are more educated, more consumer savvy and believe it or not there are a number of choices for child care that did not even exist even 5 years ago. In short, child care is part of the marketplace and competition is just part of the package. I hope the information which follows will help you and your facility get in the game.

Know your business:

It is important with childcare as with any other business, to have a clear understanding of your goals and objectives. Obviously, most individuals operate businesses for financial gain and childcare is no exception. Beyond this, however, the choice for style and philosophy is endless. As a business owner you not only have to decide the direction of your business, but clearly define your boundaries and expectations in a

way that makes your service appealing to others. Know yourself, believe in your work, and let your passion be an inspiration for your clients and your community. Being passionate about your business and your work is really the first step in a marketing plan. Frankly there is nothing more irresistible to new clients than someone who knows who they are, what they believe and where they are going. It is a sign of strength and maturity and when we are talking about parents leaving their children in your care, this is a great selling point.

Know your business community:

The second part of knowing and believing in yourself is to be a good community business person. Knowing the kind of services that exist in your immediate community not only helps you decide what particular service gaps may exist, but also the level of services available. Understanding what other program styles and choices are available proves to strengthen your program by adding new ideas as well as affirming the work you already do. It is of great benefit to you and child care as a whole to make contacts with other providers whenever possible. This opportunity to network with one another helps each individual business become sharper and enhance their existing program.. Remember to represent yourself as the professional you are. Strive to represent your business in a positive way by practicing good ethics with your business neighbors. For instance, don't ask for a fee schedule with the purpose of undercutting your fees in an attempt to have a perceived edge on your neighbor. Each business should operate on their own merit and your fees should represent fair value for your commitment to the services you provide. Parents are facing one of the hardest decisions of their lives when they search for child care. Being able to connect with a parents need to find the “very best” care, tells parents that you are confident about your service and that they can be confident too. Helping parents understand that there is a continuum of childcare services and then establishing yourself along this continuum helps the parent gain perspective, empowering them to make choices that best suit their situation. Isn't it counterproductive to encourage parents to look at other choices as well as your facility? Although it may seem as though you are chasing away business, there is nothing more positive than a business person who is convinced about the quality of their service and therefore gives full freedom of choice to the client. The client on the other hand doesn't feel chased away, but rather informed and confident that this provider has the best interest of their family and child at heart. To a parent, this is a crucial selling point. A client returning from an exhaustive search to choose your facility affirms your goals and objectives and begins a client relationship on the best possible footing.

Start with the Basics:

After you have set goals and objectives know what kind of service you wish to provide and have an understanding of the competition. It is time to take a good hard look at your existing facility.

If you started your business 5 to 15 years ago, give or take a few years, it is likely that your space could use a little face lift. This is an excellent time to begin to think outside the box and determine if you will make a major design change. For instance, ask yourself if there are any major problems with the way the space functions for the children.

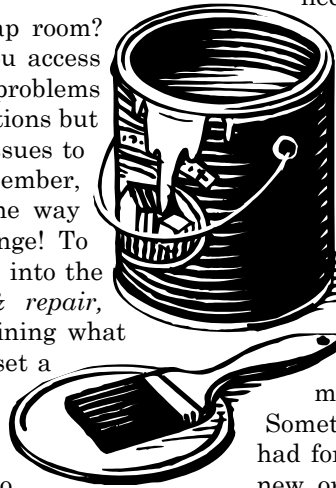
For example: Do you need a separate nap room? Are the bathrooms too far away? Can you access outside easily? Granted, some of these problems may not be resolved without major renovations but it is always worth acknowledging these issues to see if creative solutions can be found. Remember, just because you have always done it one way doesn't mean it can't and shouldn't change! To help you get started, divide your concerns into the following four categories: *cleanliness & repair, paint, flooring, furnishings.* After determining what needs to happen, prioritize your list and set a budget. I realize that most child care programs are not financial windfalls but as a business person, a percentage of funds must be put aside for this purpose to assure the ongoing success of the business.

Remember the old adage, "you can't make money if you don't spend money". Regardless of how minor or major the face lift will be, strip the entire space, leaving nothing but the walls and flooring. Go into the space with a clear vision and begin to imagine and dream. This is an excellent time to do a little research on the internet, leaf through home decorating magazines etc. There are excellent magazines devoted to designing children's bedrooms and play spaces which have wonderful creative ideas for storage, room arrangement and the most important of all.....COLOUR! You may not think so, but regardless of what you do in the room with furnishings, activity centres or toys, colour sets the mood in the playroom and speaks volumes when it comes to first impressions and the livability quotient. We live in an age of "home design" and all the trappings that go along with it. If you are unsure of how to choose a great colour or colours for your facility, many paint and home decorating outlets can provide you with free or nominal cost interior designers that will work with you to help you create the mood that will suit your needs. Having viewed literally hundreds of facilities within the last 20 years I have almost seen it all. I find the best living environments for children to be ones where the colours are harmonious, cheery and restful. Remember, the children as well as staff must live in these rooms throughout all seasons so choose well. Primary colours may seem great on the paint chip but cover the walls in them and add all the colourful toys and furnishings and it could be stimulation overload. However, do the opposite and paint the rooms all

white and you may have a stark, cold and clinical feel to the space, so don't be afraid to ask for advice.

The next most important item is flooring. This provides the basis for the comfort, activity level and continuity of the space. Flooring can either restrict the activities and the flow and comfort of the facility or it can enhance it. Choose something appropriate for your situation. For instance make sure there is enough hard wearing, easy clean surfacing to allow the kind of freedom small children need to be creative and learn new skills in the eating areas. Provide enough soft easy clean carpeting to provide the warmth and comfort so necessary for infants and toddlers who spend most of

their time on the floor. Again, home building stores can provide you with all the necessary information and advice about a range of appropriate choices in a number of price points.



Make the most of what you have:

Once you have set the mood and prepared a workable surface, it is time to be creative. If you have been operating for sometime and find it difficult to see your space differently, ask for help. A friend, family member or even a school age child may have some wonderfully creative ideas that may inspire you and get your creative juices flowing.

Sometimes the furnishings, toys and equipment that we have had for years are still perfectly functional when utilized in a new or creative way. For instance that tired, chipped child sized table could now be given a coat of paint and a new job as the playdough / self serve art area or science table. Review your goals and objectives for your program to refresh your mind about what kind of program you want, look at what you have, and be creative! Sometimes we just get stuck and need to think of how we can use our equipment differently to meet our goals and objectives. Clutter and children seem to be synonymous so devising storage solutions is a must. Speaking from experience, it can be an uphill battle if you don't tame this storage monster. As you place each piece of equipment and each toy back into the revised play space there should be one cardinal rule; if it has no storage, it has no place. This will force you to be ruthless in getting rid of excess "stuff" that never gets used but that you might "need" some day. Move into your updated space clean and uncluttered with a place for everything and everything in its place. As I write this I must admit, it is a monster that I have only partially tamed myself, but remember don't give up!! Once you have created new "areas" and developed new traffic patterns for your playrooms you may want to decide on adding one or two new ideas or pieces. Think about having areas or pieces of equipment that can be rotated seasonally or with the children's interest or developmental age. This ability to change the space on an ongoing basis renews the staff and children and keeps you aware of your facility's need for repair, cleaning or function change. This habit of renewal helps you to always present your space fresh and thoughtfully prepared for new clientele. Ask friends and relatives to view your space from time to time, giving their honest first impressions. This is an invaluable exercise that helps keep your program on the cutting edge.

Once all the furnishings and equipment have been replaced and the make over is all but complete remember one thing--this is the children's space and they must live here. Give them the opportunity to live in the space and be sensitive to the need to change things to fit their needs. Allow for tweaking your design for the first few weeks until it works for everyone. This of course is particularly true when families share their personal living space with that of their family child cares, so be flexible.

Final step: Tell the world!

Finally, your child care make over is complete and you stand amazed at this vibrant new space. I guess it is true what mother used to say, "a change is as good as a vacation." With your facility revitalized you are ready to tell the world about your exciting program, but how do you begin? Although writing print ads seems fairly straight forward there really is a method to writing successful print ads which is meant to do the following three things:

1. Capture the attention of potential clients
2. Encourage clients to remember what you told them
3. Persuade them to follow through with inquiries

The following rules apply when crafting a classified add.

1. It should stand out among the competitor's ads and attract attention. Although that may sound obvious, nothing else matters if it can't do that.

2. The ad should appeal to the readers self interest, and in the case of parents it should answer a question. An ad which tells readers how they will benefit from your service piques their interest and then it has a fighting chance. It should communicate your programs uniqueness, whether that is specialized training, unique program or a well prepared facility.

3. It should motivate readers to take some action, namely placing an inquiry and ultimately to book a visit with your facility. Believe it or not, this is a lot to ask of a little 4 or 5 line print ad lost among the morning classifieds. Most ads are poorly conceived and therefore perform poorly. Some business operators have confided to me that after placing costly classified ads they have only received a couple of inquiries.

Typical classified for child care:

"Loving mom of two, licensed daycare, fenced yard, lunches/snacks, non-smoking, crafts. Spaces available. Phone: 444-4444."

You must admit, it leaves a lot to the imagination and I think tells you information that is expected, NOT unique. Remember, bringing out uniqueness makes you stand out among the rest. Think from your client's point of view. Being loving is an expectation, so is a fenced yard, snacks, nonsmoking and some sort of program involving crafts! So

far the add tells me nothing that would make a parent want to call this ad as opposed to a dozen other ads in this category.

The following is the same ad using the principles of successful print ad writing:

"Meadowview licensed child care invites your family to discover the difference quality makes. Meadowview provides a nurturing family atmosphere, stimulating children's program and beautiful children's play yard. We invite parents to come by and view our unique setting by appointment. Vacancies are currently available. Inquiries at 444-4444 or email meadowviewcc@telus.net"

The headline has my attention already because it piques my curiosity about your program. You're telling me you are different because of quality. It tells me that you are not a preschool but "family style" setting, which is very appealing to parents of young children. Offering a stimulating program tells me that there may be more to it than crayons and colouring books, and a beautiful children's play yard helps me to imagine that you have put more thought into my child's outdoor space than simply fencing for safety. Obviously, the ad MUST be true or it is pointless. If you really don't have a beautiful children's play yard don't say you do. My point is that you should bring out the best and most unique features that parents will be looking for and grab their attention with your best foot forward. Be professional, using lingo like "spaces" to convey you have vacancies is not only unprofessional but can be misleading to parents who may not be familiar with the child care field. The best thing I have found is to make a list of your attributes such as safety, training, program uniqueness, physical space, philosophy etc. Keep writing about them until it flows and conveys the kind of message you want the world to hear. I would also encourage you to add your email address or website if you have one. In this day and age, it is a familiar way to access information and you can use this vehicle to your advantage. If a client emails you with an inquiry, it is then easy to put together a comprehensive package about your facility complete with a couple of pictures, attach it to a personal email response and further pique their interest about your facility. If you do have the ability to set up a web page, this is a great way to give potential clients a "virtual tour" of your facility by helping them to imagine "their" child in your setting. So with the make-over completed and the marketing plan in place I would encourage you to do the all important "driveby" of your facility and look with fresh eyes. First impressions are crucial. If you have managed to persuade clients to come for a visit, don't ruin it now with bad curbside appeal. You know what I am talking about. Clutter and garbage in the driveway, carport or doorway of your facility. Untidy lawn or garden, old broken down cars, furnishings or appliances can be deal breakers in

Marketing (Continued from pg. 5)

this era of the savvy consumer. I have been told more than once by parents that they have not followed through with an appointment because when they drove by the facility it gave them a bad impression due to the visual state of the house or surroundings. It might sound harsh to judge someone's ability to care for a child based on the condition of your front yard or entrance but parents are desperately looking for signs that make them feel good, safe and comfortable and are quick to dismiss those that don't. Remember, there are more choices available than ever before in the child care marketplace so be a wise child care provider. My hope is that this information will give you food for thought and provide you with methods and exercises designed to improve the quality of your child care business and help you put your best foot forward in a competitive marketplace.

Taken from YMCA CRRR Vancouver Newsletter

Many thanks to Wendy Harvey at YMCA Child Care Resource and Referral for her help and to Vicki Piir for allowing us to use this article.

Island Family Info

Are you aware that the four Vancouver Island CRRRs have a website? It is called Island Family Info and it features pertinent and useful information for both yourself and the families in your care.

The Regional Coordinator for the Vancouver Island CRRRs, Delta McDonell, is the "editor & gate-keeper" for this website. Each CRRR (Sooke/Westshore; Cowichan Valley; PacificCare; and Victoria) has their own distinct area on the website where we feature such things as Child Care Provider Information, Family Information, Children's Programs, Training/Workshops, and Child Care Employment.

If you would like to feature a free advertisement on Island Family Information under the Child Care Employment section, kindly contact our office. Either Belinda or Danielle will email you a template of what we would like included in the ad. We do not write the ad for you! After all, this is a free service!

So take some time to familiarize yourself with this great website that adds more value to your services for families. www.islandfamilyinfo.ca

Butterfly Larvae



This year it was a pleasure to once again offer Painted Lady Butterfly Larvae to our child care providers. It is always a wonderful learning experience for children to be able to see the metamorphosis that transpires from furry caterpillar to beautiful butterfly! Meagan Brame of **Saxe Point Daycare** sent us this wonderful write-up about her first experience with the larvae:

"Child Care Resource and Referral was offering butterfly kits to child care centres throughout Victoria – something they had been doing for the last few years. This year I decided to try it. When I picked up the larvae it was really tiny and there were about 5 of them. I have never in my life seen something grow SO fast. They would double their size from morning to night. That pasty food in the container must have some huge growth hormone in it!! It took about 2 weeks for the caterpillars to turn into chrysalis. Every day the children and parents would come in and take a look, wondering and talking about when they would turn into the next stage. It was very exciting! This stage also took 2 weeks but low and behold – on the Friday, while the children were still at daycare, they started to hatch. The children just stood there and watched for at least 10 minutes (which is a long time for a kid) watching it occur. After the long weekend we let the butterflies go. It was both fun and bittersweet."



Photos courtesy of Meagan Brame

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Resource!



Environmental awareness is everywhere today and our new activity box, “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” is available to you to help children understand what this means.

Our activity box has something for every developmental stage, from the “Recycle Truck” for toddlers, to the puzzles, games, and books for preschoolers to school age children. We have even included several “Bulletin Board” sets and the “Good Earth Art” book for child care providers. We look forward to sharing this new resource with you.

Add-Ons

Isn't it fabulous when you have new learning materials to use with the children? We are so excited to share with you the many items we were able to purchase this spring to update and excite our activity boxes and loaning resources. We added at least one new item to about 50% of our boxes! The “Add-Ons” in the picture to the right include: Paint & Dough Rollers and idea book; Sound Boxes; Weight Box; and Tactile Dice. The last three items are based loosely on Montessori materials. The Paint & Dough Rollers include enough items for eight + friends to sit together and create wonderfully artistic prints. The Sound Boxes foster auditory skills and are “self-correcting”. The Weight Box includes cylinders that test children’s perception and matching abilities. The Tactile Dice uses a “feely bag” which contains 24 tactile disks. Children take turns rolling the large tactile die, placing their hand into the feely bag, and then trying to match what they felt on the large die to what they are feeling in the bag.



Provider Appreciation Evening

Another fun and yummy evening was had by all! We were so pleased to have everyone join us to celebrate our **20th Anniversary** and to mark **Child Care Month**. We had plenty of door prizes and take-aways for all. We featured a 20 question Trivia Game where everyone was teamed up and asked to answer questions based on our history, past employees, change in services, change in logos, change in location...I guess we have gone through plenty of changes in 20 years!

It was wonderful to see some of our new LNRs mixing and socializing with our seasoned care providers. We had a mix of group, preschool, and home-based settings attend. Everyone had opportunities to chat with us as well as make new friends.

The Trivia Game proved to be quite challenging, even for those providers who have been with us from the beginning! I think the consultants, and including me too, helped everyone along with a few hints and suggestions.

Thank you to everyone who continues to make our work so pleasant and enjoyable. Thank you too to the Ministry of Children and Family Development for their continued support of this most important program.



We've Had A lot of People Join Us in the Last While!

A Place to Grow (FCC)	Footprints Academy (LGC)	Deb Housden (RLNR)
Eleanor Anderson Family Day Care (FCC)	Kids Klub Lakehill (LGC)	Dianne Hudson (RLNR)
Garderie Chez Nini (FCC)	Little Spartans Day Care (LGC)	Heather Spell (RLNR)
Gnome's Home Daycare (FCC)	Neighbourhood Junior Kindergarten (LGC)	Jennifer Riddell Matte (RNLR)
KAV Silly Fun Family Childcare (FCC)	Saanichton Montessori Educare (LGC)	Kacey Cox-Tiffin (RLNR)
Kitten's Kids (FCC)	ArtsCalibre Academy (Preschool)	Kristee Nestor (RLNR)
Kris' Family Daycare (FCC)	Cloverdale Elementary Preschool	Krystal Shortt (RLNR)
Samba Child Care (FCC)	Little Red School House Preschool	Leslie Crawford (RLNR)
Sam's Daycare (FCC)	Amy Marson (RLNR)	Melissa Hanson (RLNR)
Sugar Pies Hunny Bunch (FCC)	Angela Hogue (RLNR)	Melissa Masse (RLNR)
Tall Trees Child Care (FCC)	Angela Mueni (RLNR)	Michael Fuller (RLNR)
Tiny Toes Child Care (FCC)	Boom Caverhill (RLNR-VFP)	Michelle Heslop (RLNR)
Toddler Town Child Care (FCC)	Cara Hilditch (RLNR)	Tania Harp (RLNR-SCD)
Tigger's Too Afterschool Care (LGC)	Chantelle McLarty (RLNR)	Tanya Martin (RLNR)
Tigger's Playschool (LGC)	Corinne Bargen (RLNR)	Victoria Davidson (RLNR)
	Cory Waugh (RLNR)	
	Danielle Meitz (RLNR)	



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Victoria Child Care Resource and Referral, in partnership with the community, strives to enhance the availability and accessibility of a range of quality child care options and services to meet the needs of children, families, and child care providers.

Victoria Child Care Resource and Referral is funded by the Province of British Columbia and sponsored by the Single Parent Resource Centre

