



JULIE MUNRO,
NurseryCam

The changing face of modern nurseries

The prospect of looming recession and rising unemployment are both adding to the already volatile business challenges faced by nursery owners every day. Running a successful nursery in 2009 takes an owner who is business savvy, forward thinking and has a passion for providing good quality childcare. Ensuring your continued success is vital. We spoke to Philippa Stephen-Martin, owner of Cbabiesafe nurseries, to find out how they're withstanding the downturn

Philippa runs two nurseries in Sussex; her strong working ethos is clearly paying off as she needs to accommodate an additional five places by April to meet waiting list demand. Philippa says, "Getting the people and resources in place is just the first step to adding business value. NurseryCam were a fantastic help in the beginning because they provided all the technology we needed, including webcams and CCTV. They've since expanded their offering to include fingerprint access systems and also the design and development of nursery websites to make being visible easy."

Philippa has worked hard to create the highest standards of nursery care – and she has certainly learnt a few things along the way. We wanted to know more so she kindly agreed to share her top five tips for nursery success with us.

1. Create a safe and secure environment

"We're hoping to introduce top-of-the-range fingerprint door access technology shortly because staff were frustrated at having to answer the door all the time. The access system from NurseryCam (who also implemented our webcam and CCTV system) means that parents only need to scan their fingerprint to get in, allowing staff to get on with caring for the children."

2. Listen to parents and staff

"Technology can really add value to a nursery. Although it can be a significant investment up front, it is really worth it to stand out and keep you at the forefront of the industry. Our webcams are valued by everyone – they're great for a parent working abroad or even grandparents who live elsewhere. They're fantastic for trainees too! I can simply log in and check their progress, as well as see that

everything is running smoothly, without having to call in and disrupt staff."

3. Think ahead

"We aren't afraid to test the water with new technology and systems. Being different got us noticed in those difficult first months and we've had full occupancy ever since. It's important to not just match your competitors' standards, but exceed them. Make sure you have considered all the options, whether that is through the introduction of new technology or by making it easier for parents to access the nursery with an easy-to-use entry system.

4. Advertise through all channels

"Marketing is incredibly important for any nursery. One of the major downfalls of some very high quality nurseries has been an expectation that business will come to them. Yes, word of mouth can account for a high percentage of business, but you really need to get seen. Choosing your medium is important, for example newspapers can be great for getting local traffic but it costs money every week. Most people's first port of call is the internet these days; so having a well presented, professional website can make all the difference. NurseryCam's package is cost effective too, with a one off payment upfront."

5. Quality care is the best strategy

"We saw signs of the downturn early and it made us cautious. By thinking ahead and planning carefully, we've managed to negotiate the economic crisis. I think the most important advice for any nursery is, don't assume your business is safe. Make sure your budget is being spent on things which will add value to your nursery and improve nursery life for parents, children and staff. Getting the



resources in place to provide the highest quality of care comes first; redecorating (for example) comes second."

All of the above sounds like good solid advice to us. Before concluding, we asked Philippa what her final tip for new nursery owners would be. "The next few years are certainly going to be tough for the whole industry – but not impossible. Nurseries who are passionate about their business and focus on quality will come out of the recession stronger!" she concluded. ■

- For more information contact Cbabiesafe on 01273 770441 (Hove) or 01903 215020 (Worthing).



Parental
Webcam



CCTV



Access
Control



Website
Design

NurseryCam



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