

## **Creating a Welcoming Moment for an Early Years Childcare Provision**

**Advertising your business has been successful in increasing take up now consider how to make your setting welcoming for visitors**

Good customer service includes creating the right impression when people first walk into a building, where they are looking to buy something or get a great service.

Perhaps you can remember a time when you walked into a restaurant and was asked to sit at a dirty table with plates piled high, to be told it will be cleared in a minute?

It is the same for customers walking into your childcare setting. Both the physical environment and staff behaviour is important when a customer (parent or child) walks through the door.

In most cases your reception area is where every person who visits you will come to first before taking up any activities or meeting other staff. It is the place where people will form their first impression of your service.

It is very important to greet people consistently, make them feel comfortable and assist them in a professional and friendly manner.

Any reception staff must be able to help people and refer them to other services. This includes being ready with a range of appropriate information including signposting to local health and Children's Centre.

If people are going to wait in the reception area, offer them a glass of water.

**Which of the following do you provide?**

**Bookshelves** with books to support general parenting both adult and child focused and books to support local training and courses.

**Breastfeeding facilities** chairs in drop in and/or in a separate area.

**Displays** at both child and adult height which could include for example:

- Jobcentre Plus board;
- fixed displays and pictures;
- interactive displays for example sensory and mood mirrors at child height;
- boards for support organisations to use;
- cork boards or display; and
- a public board for general use such as advertising sales.

**Leaflet display** to support general signposting to other services.

**Consider an accessible space** for confidential conversations.

**Reception area** Inviting and welcoming

**Suggestion box** with comment cards to encourage suggestions about all children's service and a display to show feedback from previous suggestions.

## **Welcoming families**

Make sure all staff know:

- How to confidently speak to parent/carer (face to face and over the phone)
- The ethos of your organization
- What services you provide
- What the settings funded early education offer is
- The process for joining any waiting list for a place
- The process for booking a place
- How to help parent/carer access the funded entitlement for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds (including the extended hours)
- How to help parent/carer to understand any help with the cost of childcare (such as Tax Free Childcare), and additional funding that may be available for the childcare provider that would directly to support their children (such as Early Years Pupil Premium).
- Any charges that will apply, and how they will be billed / charged.
- How to show parent/carer around the setting (or how to greet parents when they are looking around).
- How to talk to parent/carer about safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- How to support parent/carer who may be anxious about accessing childcare for the first time or returning to childcare
- How to demonstrate their enthusiasm about their work with children to parent/carer who are prospective customers.

## **Top Tips on providing information, advice and assistance to parents**

- ✓ Many parents will be nervous about asking for information so be as open and friendly as possible.
- ✓ Help parents to use any public computers or information points you may provide.
- ✓ Parents don't know what they don't know, so always offer information about additional services and information that may be of interest or relevance to them.
- ✓ Think about having someone in your setting to be the key person for information issues so all your staff are giving up to date information on the latest services and following best practice.
- ✓ Make good use of your leaflet racks, choosing appropriate up to date information.
- ✓ Make sure displays are clear and well organized.
- ✓ Make sure that your website is up to date and reflects your settings ethos
- ✓ Think about how different people for example, fathers and young parents typically like to get information and adapt your approach to appeal to them.
- ✓ Invest in customer service training for your staff.
- ✓ Ensure that your Suffolk Infolink information is updated and staff have knowledge of this. This holds a directory of services, information and activities for families including sports, arts, uniform groups, parenting support, the Local Offer for children with SEND and much more.