



Striving for full occupancy

Earning parental trust is crucial to the success of any nursery. The trouble is, it's not enough to provide excellent standards of care, a fun and safe environment for children and a pleasant place for staff to work. Parents need to see it for themselves; to feel involved in the nursery; and to know and trust that after they have left, their child will be happy and well cared for.

Successful nurseries achieve this in a variety of ways. Staff obviously play a crucial role as they represent the 'face' of the nursery and will affect how each parent they individually deal with actually views the nursery overall. Many nurseries also work hard to involve parents as much as possible, either through traditional methods such as open days, events, newsletters etc, or by making use of newer ideas such as parental webcams.

Family-run nursery, Beach House in Wales, is one example as proprietor Helen Thomas comments. I like my standards high, and from the start I understood that earning parental trust was crucial to our success. says Helen. Beach House did achieve success extremely quickly. It opened its doors in January 2007 and within three months had reached 95% occupancy.

Helen attributes a large proportion of her enviable enrolment figures to the webcams. Parents love the fact that they can see for themselves how

Occupancy levels can make or break even the best nursery. With fierce competition and occasional critical comment in the mainstream press, it would be easy to assume that achieving success from scratch could take months in the current climate. However, many nurseries can and do achieve full occupancy – and, importantly, sustain it over time. The key is tuning into what parents are thinking

happy their child is – and are reassured by our confidence in the quality of care we provide.

As a qualified nurse and the mother of a child who didn't settle easily at nursery, Helen already knew first hand how difficult it can be for anxious parents to leave their child in the care of others. In most cases, nursery staff will endeavour to reassure, however for the absent parent it is hard to really believe that the unsettled child they left behind is now smiling and playing happily. Helen's approach to this very real problem was to create a nursery which combined motivated staff, a relaxing, beachfront environment and parental webcams; in order to meet parents' needs in a variety of ways.

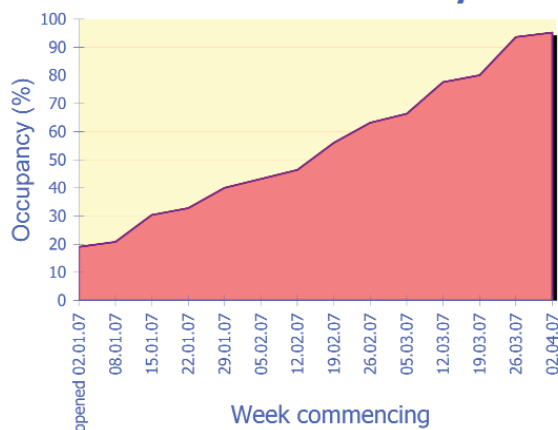
Of course, attracting good quality staff isn't always easy either, however by achieving high occupancy levels it is also possible to pay higher than the area



average wages – the clearest demonstration of the value a nursery places on its people. But feeling valued at work is not just about money of course, as Helen says: This is a family business. I want my staff to very much feel a part of what we are achieving at Beach House – because everyone has a role to play in our success.

I'm proud of the work we all do here and welcome the opportunity for parents to watch exactly what we are doing at any point in the day. It's great for them to see for themselves how much fun their children have at Beach House. ■

Beach House Nursery



- If you would like further information about parental webcams, CCTV or security for your nursery, please visit www.nurserycam.co.uk, or contact NurseryCam Ltd on 01334 751688 or email info@nurserycam.co.uk.

