



JULIE MUNRO,
NurseryCam

The quality equation



Hannah
Mottram

Nurseries are always coming under the microscope. As parents or industry peers we're always looking for an indefinable stamp of quality. But really, what constitutes a good nursery? Is there a formula that says that a bit of x, y and z makes for contented children?

If there is, it probably doesn't have anything to do with the big 'headline initiatives'. And it almost certainly hasn't been born in a think-tank. It's not about finding the right philosophy so much as finding the right combination of things that click with children and their parents.

Quality markers

So we've identified just some of the little things that can make a big difference. And it all starts with staff. Purpose built premises and tailor made facilities? They can come later. But without the people and the passion, you've got nothing.

We asked successful nursery owner Hannah Mottram for her take on it. Having built up the reputation of her Little Bears Nursery in Shiptonthorpe over the last two years, she knows first hand the importance of absolute dedication to the cause. She's got it. And she's made absolutely sure her staff have too.

Working closely with her Assistant Manager, Angela Watson, Hannah has ensured that every prospective member of staff shows their absolute commitment to making Little Bears as good as it can be. "Our staff are our greatest advert," she says. "Their passion is infectious; the children love them, and so do the parents."

Getting the right staff on board inspires everyone. And when word spreads about what you're achieving, it leads to a rush for places and increased occupancy rates. All of which translates into more money for better facilities. Which is good news for everyone, because it really doesn't matter how small you start; you can go an awfully long way with the right ingredients.

Talking of which... good quality food is another pre-requisite. Parents work hard to instil good eating habits in their children, and they look to their nursery to

do the same. Serving freshly prepared food, sourced wherever possible from local producers is a good way to set your nursery apart. Eating seasonally helps too.

But it's not just what the children eat that's important; it's how the food is served and even where it's eaten. The best nurseries make more of mealtimes. Hannah says: "At Little Bears, we make mealtimes a social event. We all enjoy getting together to eat breakfast, lunch or tea at the same time."

Certainly that sense of community is a clear sign of a happy nursery. And it shows in relationships with parents and families too. For Little Bears, getting the parents 'on board' isn't just about making sure they feel welcomed, it's about making sure they're fully involved in all aspects of their children's lives. So they've installed a NurseryCam system – it doesn't just enable parents to monitor children's progress, it builds trust. Parents can see how their children interact with the staff, and enjoy the rapport that develops.

Do it your way

Any or all of these things can distinguish the best nurseries. But perhaps the biggest is your USP. It's your personal statement of how things should be done. For Hannah that has always been to provide the most family oriented nursery possible. Again that requires taking care of the little things – making sure that parents, grandparents and relatives are all given a warm welcome and kept absolutely up-to-date with the child's progress that day (There's no room in an open and honest nursery / parent relationship for pat, generic responses.)

The 'wow' factor

There's still one little thing we've neglected to mention: not even the very



best nursery can sell itself. Parents still have to be comfortable with the idea of sending their children there; they have to be wowed! And next issue, we'll be taking a look at how nurseries create the elusive 'wow factor' that keeps occupancy rates up, and has parents falling over themselves to enrol their children in your nursery. ■

● For more information contact Little Bears Day Nursery on 01430 803 004 or visit their website at www.littlebears-daynursery.co.uk



Parental
Webcam



CCTV



Access
Control



Website
Design

NurseryCam



Tel: 01344 751688
www.nurserycam.co.uk
info@nurserycam.co.uk