

# A Guide to Marketing Your Child Care Program—Like a Pro



Explore strategies, tips, and best practices for marketing your child care program.



# Make your child care program the easy choice for guardians

Choosing child care is a big deal for families. This guide will help you connect with the right guardians, stand out in a crowded market, and make enrollment easier than ever. Great marketing doesn't happen by accident—it takes a clear strategy, smart tools, and the right approach. Here's where it all begins.

01. **What makes your program special?**

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02. **Create an online presence families trust**

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03. **Become the talk of the town**

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04. **Nurture families from interest to enrollment**

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05. **Establish a smoother, smarter, enrollment process**

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06. **Let technology do the heavy lifting**

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# 1. What makes your program special?



Every child care program has its own personality and its own unique offerings. Whatever it is, that special something is what makes guardians choose you over the program down the street.

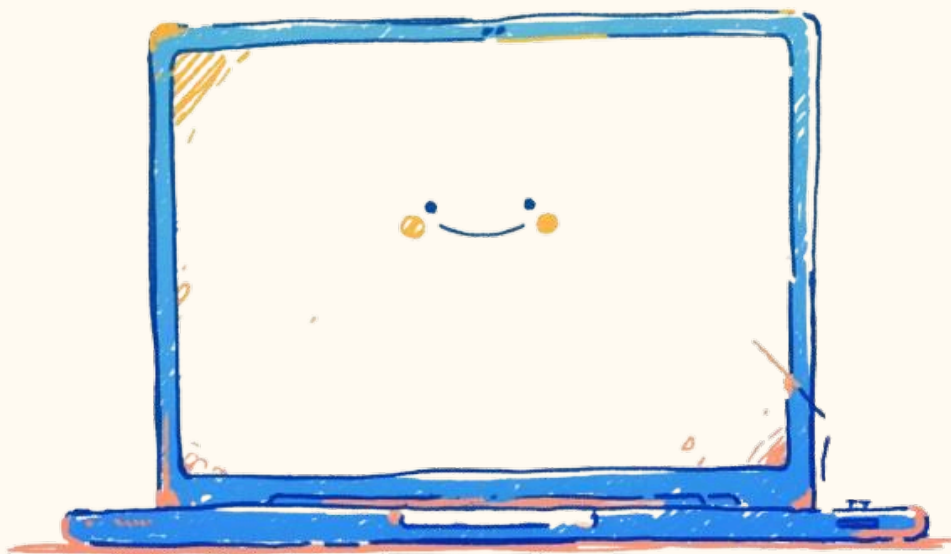
Guardians have a lot of options when it comes to child care. And they're not just looking for a place to drop off their kids. They're looking for a place that feels safe and aligns with their values. Your job is to make sure they see that in everything you do.

Start by getting clear on what sets you apart. Ask yourself:

- ✓ What makes my program the right choice?
- ✓ What do I offer that local competitors don't?
- ✓ Do I have any specialized programs or unique curriculum offerings?
- ✓ How long is my waitlist?

Once you've answered these questions, the next step is to act. The following sections will go over how you can showcase your unique value in marketing materials, on your website, and in your conversations with prospective families.

# 2. Create an online presence families trust



You never get a second chance to make a first impression—and these days, that first impression is happening online, long before the guardian walks through the door of your program.

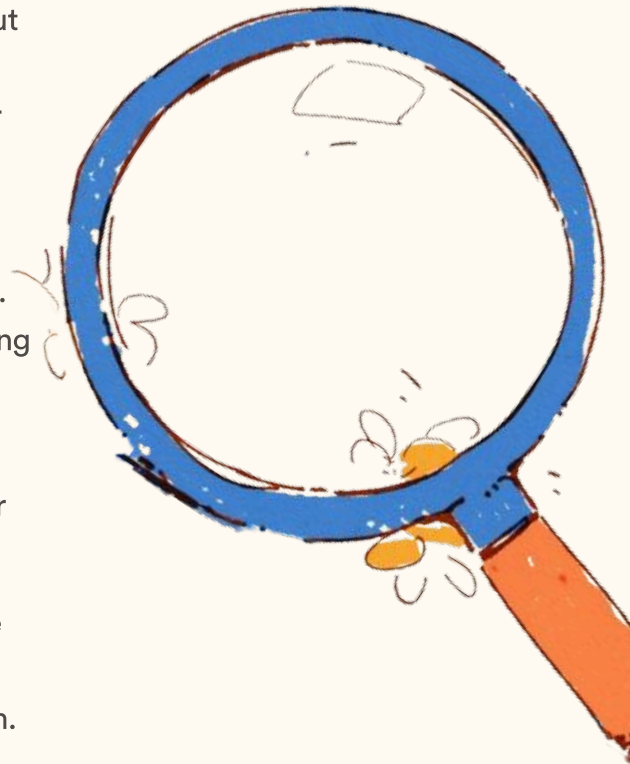
When guardians start their search for child care, where do they go first? Google. Maybe Facebook. A local parenting group. If they can't find you easily (or if your website looks like it hasn't been touched since flip phones were in), they might never take the next step.

A strong online presence helps guardians feel confident that your program is professional, organized, and worth their time. And trust us, in a world where decisions are made in a matter of clicks, you want to be the one they click on.

## How else can guardians find you?

Your website is the foundation of your online presence, but social media, local parenting groups, and even Google reviews all play a big role in helping families discover your program.

- **Facebook and Instagram:** Share photos of daily activities, events, and little wins from your classrooms. Set a calendar reminder so you stick to a regular posting schedule—social media is more powerful when used consistently and often.
- **Google My Business:** Claim your listing and keep your info up to date. Guardians will Google you!
- **Guardian reviews and recommendations:** Encourage happy families to leave reviews online to help other guardians feel confident about choosing your program.



## Let families tell your story

Good news travels fast. One solid referral can have a trickle-down effect on a whole group of friends. You may even consider offering discounts or promotions to maximize the power of referrals and incentivize families to promote your program.

One guardian tells their best friend. That friend tells three more parents at soccer practice. Boom. You've got a whole new set of families curious about your program. Try these ideas:

- **Create a guardian referral program:** Offer a discount on tuition, a free week of child care, or a fun incentive for families who bring in new enrollments.
- **Turn happy guardians into ambassadors:** Identify your most enthusiastic families and invite them to share their experiences—whether that's through testimonials, video interviews, or informal chats with prospective guardians.
- **Encourage online reviews:** Guardians look to Google, Facebook, and Yelp for recommendations. A few glowing reviews can make a world of difference when families are comparing options.
- **Celebrate referrals:** Give a shout-out (with permission) to families who've referred others—whether it's in a newsletter, social post, or even a small gift of appreciation.

# 3. Become the talk of the town



No marketing campaign will ever replace the power of a real connection—and those connections are made in the community. Guardians want to enroll their children in a program that feels familiar, trusted, and part of something bigger. That’s where getting involved in local events and networking with other businesses can make a big impact.

## Make your program a household name

Don’t underestimate the power of community. Attend community events, partner with other programs in the area for enrollment partnerships (if they’re full, they’ll refer you and vice versa), or host an open house so others can get to know you, your program, and your approach.

- **Be present at local events:** Family-friendly festivals, back-to-school fairs, and farmers’ markets are all gold for meeting guardians in a relaxed, no-pressure setting. Set up a booth with fun activities for kids and let guardians ask questions.
- **Partner with local businesses:** Small businesses love supporting each other. See if you can leave brochures at the front desks of coffee shops, pediatricians, or toy stores.
- **Host open houses and community playdates:** Give guardians a reason to stop by! Invite families to a themed event or a Meet the Teachers night. This makes it easy for them to picture their child having fun in your space.
- **Collaborate with nearby child care programs:** Build relationships with other providers and establish a network that helps everyone fill their classrooms.
- **Put lead capture on autopilot:** Make it easy for families to express interest and stay in touch. A digital sign-up form via a CRM tool can help you seamlessly capture, organize, and manage prospective student info.



# 4. Nurture families from interest to enrollment

Just because a guardian asks about your program doesn't mean they'll enroll right away. Choosing child care isn't a snap decision, and many families spend weeks weighing their options, which is why you must put deliberate effort into staying top of mind. The right follow-up strategy can gently guide them from 'just looking' to signing up.



## Make every follow-up count

Keeping in touch with interested families is so important, but doing it all manually just isn't realistic (or scalable). This is where automation tools, like a customer relationship management (CRM) system, can help. A CRM acts as your digital assistant; organizing leads, tracking interactions, and automating communication so no inquiry slips through the cracks. This is the very best way to personally engage every interested family without adding more to your plate.

No matter the step—whether a tour is booked, an inquiry form is submitted, or something else—you can automate personalized emails and SMS messages based on a guardian's interactions with your marketing efforts. Track a family's progress through the enrollment process by automatically assigning stages, and even re-engage those you haven't heard from in a few weeks.

- **Timing is everything:** If a guardian books a tour, follow up right away with a confirmation email.
- **Make it personal:** Use their child's name in emails, reference something they mentioned during their visit, and tailor your messages based on their level of interest.
- **Show, don't just tell:** Include photos, video clips, and guardian testimonials in your follow-ups.
- **Use automation (but keep it human):** Setting up an automated email sequence means you won't lose track of interested families.

Don't be afraid to check in: If a family visits but hasn't enrolled, a friendly check-in email can be the nudge they need.

## From 'maybe later' to 'let's enroll'

Sometimes, a family expresses interest but doesn't enroll. Maybe they found another program, maybe the timing wasn't right, or maybe they just got busy. That doesn't mean they're a lost lead.

Keep these families in the loop with occasional updates—an open house invite or an announcement about a new program. You never know when circumstances might change, and a simple reminder could bring them back through your doors.

# 5. Establish a smoother, smarter enrollment process

No one enjoys paperwork—not guardians, not your staff, not anyone. Tracking down missing forms, chasing signatures, and deciphering illegible handwriting is frustrating and unnecessary with the tools available today.

## Ditch the paper, keep the personal touch

Following a tour, you can automatically send families instructions for completing required enrollment materials. Save your staff from having to reach out to parents for missing documents by relying on automated emails to send reminders. Automating this process allows you to focus on creating the best welcome experience. Plus, it provides a smooth, professional enrollment journey that parents will appreciate.

**Imagine this:** A guardian finishes their tour, falls in love with your program, and decides to enroll. Instead of handing them a thick packet of forms and a pen that may or may not work, you say:

**"Great! You'll get an email in just a few minutes with everything you need to enroll. It's all online—super quick and easy. Let us know if you have any questions!"**



Simple. Professional. Seamless.

Now, instead of overwhelming guardians with paperwork, you're guiding them through a smooth process that makes them feel confident and excited.



## How automation makes enrollment a breeze

A well-structured digital enrollment system doesn't just make life easier for guardians—it takes a huge burden off your staff, too. Here's how:

- **No more chasing forms:** Automated emails remind guardians when a document is missing, so your team doesn't have to.
- **Faster completion rates:** When guardians can sign forms on their phone in minutes, they're much more likely to actually do it.
- **Fewer mistakes:** Digital forms mean no more struggling to read handwriting or dealing with incomplete paperwork.
- **A polished, professional experience:** Guardians want to feel like they're choosing a program that's organized and tech-savvy.

# 6. Let technology do the heavy lifting

Once a tour is booked, automation sends a follow-up email or text with key details and next steps. It's like an invisible assistant, making sure every guardian stays informed at just the right time.

Here's how it works:

- ➔ A guardian books a tour → They instantly get an email confirming their visit, along with helpful info about what to expect.
- ➔ The day before the tour → They receive a friendly reminder so they don't forget.
- ➔ After the tour → A follow-up email lands in their inbox, thanking them for coming and providing next steps to enroll.

Businesses with automated CRM tools in place see a significant improvement in lead conversion—**up to 300% more** than those without one.

Source: [Statista](#)

## Track, tweak, and grow

Effective marketing is all about trying things until you figure out what works. With the right tracking tools, you can measure things like:

- How many people visit your website each month
- How many of those visitors book a tour
- How many tours turn into enrollments
- Which emails are getting opened (and which are ignored)



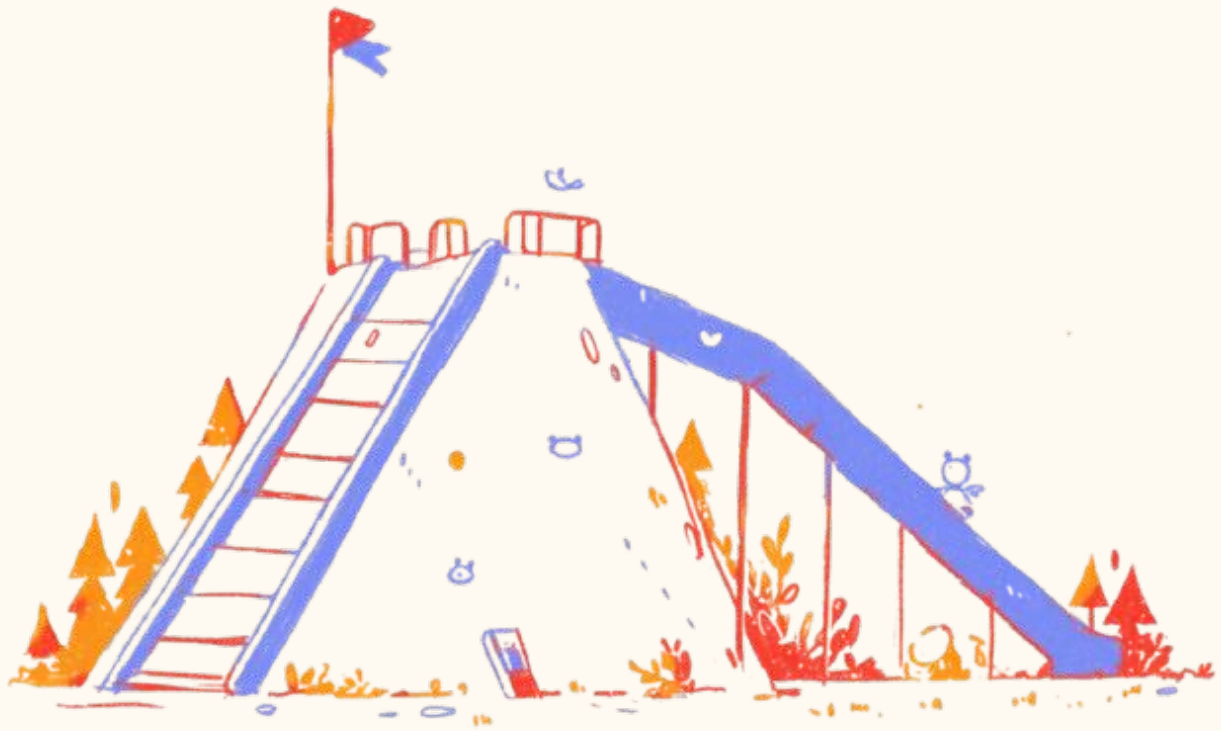
## Work smarter, not harder

You're already wearing a million hats as a child care provider—a marketing manager shouldn't have to be one of them. With automation, tracking, and smart marketing tools, you can make sure every family gets the information they need, without adding more work to your plate.



## Marketing that works while you focus on what matters

The best marketing doesn't just get families through the door—it keeps them coming back. With a few smart strategies (and the right tools), you'll spend less time chasing leads and more time doing what you love—helping kids learn and grow.



Future-proof your child care business with Playground—the true all-in-one tool designed to simplify your operations and drive growth. Ready to discover how we can help your business thrive?

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