

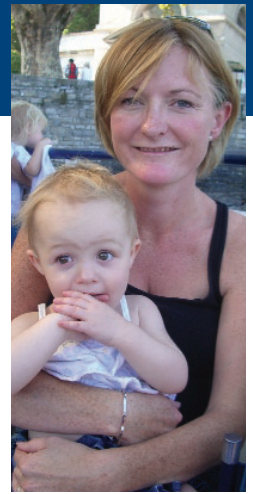


The secret to success for modern nurseries



JULIE MUNRO,
NurseryCam

The popularity of nurseries has soared over the past few years and as more and more parents return to work, nurseries are seeking the best facilities. But is it these which really make a success story? We delve further into what makes a successful nursery with Tina Powick, proud owner of Rendlesham Nursery. Tina is also about to open her second nursery in July this year, typically one of the most challenging times of the year for the industry...



Tina Powick

Q You achieved full occupancy very quickly with your first nursery, which opened in 2005. What's your secret?

A I think the key is trust. We try not to treat the nursery just as a business and focus on creating a transparent and trusting environment for staff, parents and children. Our staff love their jobs and that gives parents confidence straight away. And happy parents mean happy children – and bookings of course!

Some people have said that it's crazy to open our second nursery in July but we've already had 40 enquiries – and it's not actually open yet! I think it's because parents have seen how confident our staff are - and how much we believe in them and their abilities.

Q You mention the notion that having happy staff means happy parents, why do you think this works?

A When parents and children are greeted by interested staff, they feel a sense of involvement. Parents know that the nursery will listen to them – and that makes a real difference. For example, if a child has a certain routine at home, parents know they can tell staff and actually trust them to keep to it wherever

possible. It's that sort of bond that makes a nursery work.

Secondly, society puts a lot of pressure on parents to stay at home with their children. Unfortunately for most this isn't possible. From the beginning we wanted to lessen the burden for parents, and help them feel comfortable about going back to work rather than guilty. Parents feel confident in us and they can see that I trust my staff. And once we installed webcams, parents could see for themselves just what a good job the team does.

Q Do you see the webcams as part of the whole 'trust' ethos you have created?

A Yes, definitely. We installed webcams in all rooms when we first opened to show parents exactly how open we were. It all goes back to making parents feel involved in their child's life at nursery.

Parents don't have to worry about their child on their first day at nursery, or any other day for that matter. They can simply log on via the secure connection and see how happy their child is, what they're getting up to, and who their friends are.

Our job is to make sure parents feel comfortable leaving their child at nursery and the webcams help us do this. That's why we're installing them in our second nursery too; they really make a difference for parents.

Q If you could offer a new nursery manager or owner just one piece of advice, what would it be?

A That's a tricky one! There are so many things to consider, however if I had to choose one thing, it would be to make sure your staff are happy. I trust my staff implicitly and that makes a difference to them. And that kind of

positive working environment is one of the reasons why they stay.

We've spoken to many nurseries over the past few months and this sense of trust is certainly a key challenge. For the majority of those we have spoken to, the key is inclusion. It becomes clear when speaking to any nursery owner that running a nursery is as much about people (large and small!) as it is about business.

As Tina summed it up in a nutshell: "happy staff = happy parents = happy children". ■

● For more information contact Rendlesham Day Nursery on 01394 420 581 or email info@rendleshamdaynursery.com



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