



Achieving full occupancy rates is just the start...



JULIE MUNRO,
NurseryCam

Even after all the hard work of getting the numbers up, you've still got to keep it going. Maintaining full occupancy rates is just as hard. Because when your levels of quality are so high, you can't afford to slip up for a second. You have to go on excelling and innovating. (No one ever said it was going to be easy!)

But the best nurseries always make their mark. They create a buzz and get children and parents fired up with enthusiasm – that generates the right kind of interest in the good work you're doing. As one of the driving forces behind two successful nurseries – Monton and Clarendon Cottage both near Manchester, Sarah MacWilliams has seen that excitement many times, "When parents come in for the first time they're really impressed by what we're doing – they can see how involved the children are, and they can see what a bright, friendly and safe environment it is." No wonder then that even now, when parents are having to think hard about continuing their children's nursery care in the midst of a recession, both nurseries are still generating lots of interest.

Of course there are plenty of reasons why a full nursery is in everyone's best interests. Clearly a fully occupied nursery makes more money; money that can be reinvested in facilities and ongoing staff development. Those are the kinds of investments that generate outside interest and help maintain full occupancy.

There are other reasons to keep numbers up: there's nothing quite like the buzz of a full nursery. With a big selection of bouncing babies, happy toddlers and increasingly independent pre-schoolers, it makes for a vibrant mix. And that's great for the children – all of whom are learning to get along with their juniors and seniors as well as their peers.



More children = more noise, more fun and more opportunities to play.

One of the keys to maintaining full occupancy rates is a continuing commitment to innovation. If you can do something to keep your nursery at the forefront of best practice, parents will always notice. Sarah believes that having a NurseryCam CCTV system has helped set them apart. "It gives complete reassurance to parents, and gives them a whole new insight into their children's daily lives. Another benefit that we hadn't considered is how good it is for parents who are in the armed forces."

"Hi, Its Troy's Dad I'm at work out in Iraq and am enjoying watching my son run around playing, I think that it is great for me to be able to see what he is up to while I'm away. Thank you to all the staff for the wonderful job that they do with my son, have fun and will see you when I get back J" Adam (parent)

Once parents have experienced NurseryCam, it's very hard to imagine life without it. They get the security of knowing their children are happy, and they get to see them learning and laughing and making the most of their day. And there's always plenty to see: children at Monton and Clarendon Cottage enjoy a wide range of activities, including music, French and dance. It's a varied and evolving curriculum – as it needs to be. As Sarah knows, the best nurseries go on evolving. "We never stand still; we never say we're as good as we can be, and we always try to stay one or two steps ahead."

While price is always going to be an important factor in keeping occupancy up, you shouldn't get too hung up on it. Parents know that they might have to pay a little more for a visibly superior level of service. And that's okay. No matter how many cheaper priced competitors spring up, parents will always let the wellbeing of their child take priority. So maintaining



full occupancy isn't about competing with local nurseries on price; it's purely about your quality of service relative to theirs.

Remember, this isn't a sprint. Nurseries that operate at lower prices or ride on the back of some good publicity may see spikes in their occupancy rates, but unless they're able to provide a consistent level of service they'll struggle further down the line. But if you can maintain your improved service offering, you'll ride out the competition, and you'll keep parents and children happy for the longer term. ■

- For more information contact Monton Village School on 01617 890 472 or visit their website at <http://montonvillageschool.com> and Clarendon Cottage Nursery on 01617 893 071 or visit their website at <http://www.clarendoncottage.com>



Parental Webcam



CCTV



Access Control



Website Design

NurseryCam



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