



**Care. Connect. Grow.**

Strengthening California's Home-Based Child Care

**CCIP** Child Care  
Initiative Project

California Child Care Resource & Referral

**NETWORK**

[www.rnnetwork.org](http://www.rnnetwork.org)

## Family Child Care Marketing 101: Getting Started

Welcome to family child care! It is fantastic that you have started your business. Here are some tips to get started with marketing so you can bring families into your program.

### Research Your Market

Become familiar with other family child care businesses in your area. Your local Resource and Referral (R&R) agency can help you learn about family child care in your area. Explore what other child care businesses are offering such as hours, approach with children, and rates\* in your area. Find out when your R&R is hosting upcoming training sessions (or events) where you can meet other providers in your community. How do they market themselves? Are there ways to promote your business that sets you apart? Consider what you have learned and what you can offer to meet the needs of families.

### Identifying Your Target Audiences

Think about whose business you're trying to attract. Families with young children, of course, but beyond that, are you trying to bring in people from your neighborhood? A larger part of your region? Children learning more than one language? Children with disabilities? Infant, toddler, preschool, or school-age children?

### Convey Your Approach Through Your Brand And Messages

Now that you've identified your potential customers, consider what they'll want to know and need to hear to decide to entrust their children to you. Your key messages should answer the essential questions any family has with a compelling, persuasive response—how will their children spend their days? What will they learn? How will you keep them safe? What experience and qualifications can you share?

Talk about why you wanted to start a childcare business and how children grow under your care.

### Types Of Advertising And Outreach

- Email newsletters (keep them short and interesting!)
- Website and social media (make sure you follow our online tips!)
- Flyers, signs, and mailers at key locations (go to where your customers are!)
- Brochures that parents can share with their friends (make it easy for people to promote you!)
- A sign outside your business (if you feel comfortable)
- Online and print classified ads (help people learn about your business!)

### How Currently Enrolled Families Can Help Promote Your Business

- Offer a bonus or discount to families who refer new clients
- Ask families to tell their friends about your business
- Collect testimonials from families for your website

\* It is illegal for child care businesses in the same area to discuss their rates with each other. This is because of antitrust laws about price-fixing.



## Family Child Care Marketing 101:

# Websites and Profiles

Websites and profiles are valuable marketing tools for any business—it's a place to show what you do, answer questions, and make sure families who are looking for child care can get in touch. Having your own business website allows for more content, but you can also claim a profile on [mychildcareplan.org](http://mychildcareplan.org), California's child care referral website, to promote your business for free.

### Why Is It Important To Have A Website or Profile For Your Child Care Business?

- Promote your business to families looking for child care in your area
- Share your approach and your strengths in your own words
- Look professional, prepared, and welcoming to new families
- Avoid confusion between your business and others with a similar name
- Provide basic information and answer common questions about your family child care business

### What Goes On Your Website?

- Information about your licensing and professional development
- Profiles of you and your staff members
- Story of why you started your business
- Contact information and details for how prospective clients can learn more
- Photos or videos of your child care space for a "virtual tour"
- Happy testimonials from families
- Photos and information that highlight your approach to child care

### Build-your-own Website Platforms

It's easier to build your own website than you might think, and many tools and templates are available to help you make it look great. These are a few examples:

- GoDaddy
- Wix
- Squarespace
- Wordpress

### Where Can You Find Pictures?

#### Take your own

Photos of your business in action—children playing, napping, or eating and happy parents dropping them off or picking them up—can be a great way to show what a day at your business is like. Make sure you have signed photo and video releases (permission) for each child!

#### Visit stock photo sites

Websites like Pixabay have free stock photos. Shutterstock, Pexels, Unsplash, and more have stock photos available for purchase or free use. These can be a good way to collect professional-quality images for your website. When you find photos you like, make sure you follow the legal guidelines for commercial use and always credit the person or business that owns them if required. It is best to check the copyright first to ensure you have permission to copy and paste images.

### Costs And Hidden Fees

When creating a website, you will probably have two separate bills: one for the domain (your website's address or URL) and one for the website itself. These bills are usually due annually, so your website could be taken down if you don't stay up to date on payments. If your website has special features, like somewhere for customers to log in or a connected app, those may cost extra. You might want to hire a designer or web developer to help create your website.

A number of online platforms offer services to promote your business. In addition to looking at paid options, explore [mychildcareplan.org](http://mychildcareplan.org) which is available to all California's family child care providers at no cost as part of state child care resource and referral services.



## Family Child Care Marketing 101:

# Developing Your Unique Business Identity

A business identity (also called a brand) tells families what to expect from your child care business—not only what you do, but the values and qualities you bring. It's a way to define yourself as a professional and your business as unique and special.

### Why you should share your brand online:

- It shows the distinct qualities of your business
- It allows people to become familiar with your logo and outreach material
- To convey your program approach by the way you relate with children and families
- To set your business apart from other child care programs
- A brand tells the world who you are so families can begin to identify if your program is the right fit

### What can go on your website or online profile?

- Your unique experience working with children
- Perhaps you love working with children of a certain age
- Do you work with children that speak multiple languages?
- Your experience and inclusiveness in working with children with disabilities
- Your experience and professional qualifications
- Do you have a specific approach to child care that makes you stand out?
- Are there other ways your child care program is flexible to meet the needs of families?
- Is your business connected to a specific community?

### Whatever drives your business and makes it stand out can become your brand!

#### Name

The name of your business is an opportunity to say something meaningful about who you are. Be intentional about deciding on a name for your child care business and consider what first impressions that name may give your prospective families.

#### Visual marketing materials

A logo, color scheme, and other imagery help your clients understand who you are and what your business stands for. You can put your brand's imagery on signs, printed materials like flyers, on your website and social media profiles, and more.

It's worth investing some of your budget in making these assets look great, so that anyone encountering your business gets the message you're a qualified professional.

Websites like Fiverr and Upwork can connect you with affordable designers to create a logo and help guide you through the visual branding process.

#### Consistency

The professional look of your business can help draw in new families. Developing marketing materials that look and sound consistent helps establish and strengthen your brand. For example, it is important that the same name, logo, colors, and fonts be present on your business's signs, website, social media accounts, and business cards. The goal is to make it easy for potential families and others to begin to recognize your business by the way you show and tell who you are.



## Family Child Care Marketing 101:

# Social Media

### Why Use Social Media For Your Business?

Social media can be a great (and mostly free) way to promote your business to people who might not encounter your child care program otherwise. You can ask friends and currently enrolled families to share and comment on your posts, upload photos and information about your business, connect with other child care professionals, and connect with new families.

### Social Media Platforms






Though there are hundreds of social networking platforms around the world, some top ones you could consider using for your business are:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- TikTok
- YouTube

### What's The Right Network For You?

It depends on how you want to use it! Instagram and Pinterest are great if you want to focus on pictures, whereas TikTok and YouTube are primarily for videos, and LinkedIn is perfect for connecting with other business owners. Facebook does all the above and also has a lot of active groups where you can meet people who do similar work to yours, or local parent's groups where you can promote your business. Most sites have hashtags, the ability to "friend" or "follow" other users and to engage with their posts, and ways to establish a business profile and pay to advertise or boost a post. Hashtags are a common way of organizing.

### Quick Look: Uses And Benefits

-  **Facebook**  
Connect with others. Status updates. Join relevant groups
-  **Instagram**  
Visual Market content. Photo Filters
-  **Pinterest**  
Visually drive traffic to your website/profiles
-  **Tik Tok**  
Short videos. Fun effects
-  **YouTube**  
Showcase services. Virtual tours. Large audience

Stay active! Keep your profile up to date and try to post at least once a week.

Get permission! Posting pictures of the children in your care can be a lot of fun, but make sure you have a signed release form stating that their parent or guardian gives you permission to use their pictures and videos. That goes for pictures of adults, too!

Use hashtags! Most social media platforms allow you to connect your posts to others on the same topic by adding a hashtag symbol before a keyword at the end of your post—for example, #sacramentochildcare. Hashtags are a great, easy way for people to find your business.

Think before you post! It can be easy to make a post as soon as an idea comes, but wait a few minutes to be sure that the post will represent your business in the best possible way. Social media networks have unique features and limitations so it pays to ensure your post is intended for the right platform and audiences.

Explore the app! Every social media platform is different. Searching for relevant hashtags or other users with similar interests can give you a good sense of how to use the platform to build your business.