

KIDBIZ Resources Newsletter

**A Newsletter for Child Care and Early Childhood Professionals
January 2011** In this issue

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Thank you to all of you who took the time to write to me after last month's story and let me know how much you enjoyed it! It really means a lot to me to hear from you and know that my writing affects people in the way I hope it will. Thank you.

Starting the New Year is usually filled with goals and resolutions, so it's a good time to think up some goals for the coming year when it comes to your child care business and career. I hope this month's articles gives you lots of ideas and I wish you all an amazing year!

Hug a kid for me!

Patricia

SETTING GOALS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Everyone wants to improve the quality of care they provide, and we all hope that doing so will also increase how quickly the openings get filled, and possibly even our incomes. But those words, "raise quality" are quite ambiguous. What do we really mean when we say them? Exactly how long will it take? What will it cost? Answering these questions is how you do the real work of setting goals and achieving them. It's when you turn your dream into achievable and clearly defined steps. Let's illustrate with a few goals.

You've decided to begin to offer weekly field trips, it'll raise the quality of your program by offering hands-on experiences for the children, you'll be the only one in town that does it and it'll boost your marketing capacity and attract parents. Questions you need to answer:

- Do I have a vehicle for this or will I need to purchase a new one? If so, what will that cost?
- How much is insurance (for both the vehicle and the children when out and about)?
- Do I need car seats? If so, what do they cost and how many do I need?
- What are the licensing rules in my state that apply to field trips?
- Will I have other costs in order to meet licensing rules (eg. vehicle alarm)?
- Will it require additional staff? Will this cost me anything or can I find volunteers?
- How much can I raise my rate if I offer this new activity in my program?
- Where will I take the children and are there any costs to going to these places?
- In what ways can I market this new activity?
- How long will it take to get each item I need for this?
- If adding this to my program increases my ability to fill just one additional opening a year (that in the past was left unfilled) how much additional income will I have?
- Will adding this activity to my program pay for itself within one year? What additional income will it produce in first and subsequent years?

A good business person does not get deterred by an initial cost - it is the projected outcome that is important. Each goal you set for your business needs to go beyond the short term gain or loss and consider the long term affect. With tight budgets, it's easy for

a child care business owner to get stuck in only considering items/activities that have a small initial cost. But consider this - if you put that \$20 a week you're willing to spend on small toys at garage sales into a savings account, in just 3 months you'd have \$240 to spend on a high-end piece of children's furniture. After a year you'd have four fabulous pieces that would last you decades, and raise the quality of your environment.

Let's look at another goal.

You've decided in order to raise quality you need a better curriculum. You can purchase a predetermined box curriculum. Or you can purchase a system to guide you in creating a curriculum or lots of books on activities for creating your own. Or you can take a class on creating curriculum. Questions you need to answer:

- What is your skill level in creating developmentally appropriate material?
- What are the costs of the different options?
- What are the other programs in your area doing?
- What will help you to stand out from other programs?
- Which option is most time consuming?
- How much time do you have to dedicate to curriculum planning?
- How soon do you want to implement a new program?

The answers to these questions will not only help you make the best decision on how to create your curriculum, but what it will cost and how long it will take. These details are what give you the stepping stones in reaching your goals!

Whether you are a family child care provider or a center director or teacher, take the time to look ahead to this year's end - what do you want to see different? Make your wish list. Then start gathering information about the things you hope for. The more you know, the more detailed and clear your plans and goals will be. Setting your goals is like writing a story! You know the beginning (where you are now), you know the ending (where you want to be at the end of the year), now you need to connect the dots! For example, you want to have a new play structure by the end of the year. Ask yourself lots of questions, and you'll build your year's story.

- What type of play structure do I want?
- Do I have materials for building a structure right now?
- What materials do I need and what do they cost?
- What month will work best for building the play structure?
- Can I get parents to volunteer to help build it or do I need to hire someone?
- How many months are between now and when I want it built?
- What licensing rules apply to having a play structure?
- In addition to the play structure materials, are there other costs? (ground cover, fencing, etc.)

Let's say you discover you've got some lumber already in your garage, the child care parents are thrilled to help you build something new, and you'll have \$200 you can save from your tax return to go towards more supplies. You set goals:

Goal 1: Choose which play structure I want and get the supplies list.

Goal 2: Put a day on the calendar for a Parent Work day to build it. (Let's say it's August)

Goal 3: The cost of all materials needed is \$500, I have \$200, so budget to save \$300 over the next 8 months = \$37.50 each month)

Goal 4: I'll need wood chips under the play structure, call the city to see where free chips can be obtained for playgrounds. Or, find out cost of purchasing and budget over 8 months. (TIP: Call a local tree removal service, they chip the trees they cut and are happy to have a place to take them!)

Goal 5: Consider asking parents for a one-time donation to help improve their child's outdoor play space.

This last goal is one often overlooked. Parents very often are more than happy to contribute to something that will improve their child's daily life. If you care for 8 children and each parent donated just \$40 (not an unheard of amount), you'd have more than you need for the structure and you could use your own savings for the wood chips.

The key in reaching your goals is to really break them down into their parts, and see just what it will take to achieve each part. Another example - earning a degree in Early Childhood. It seems so huge when you are working full time already, probably caring for a family as well as other interests in your life. Not to mention the cost of 4 years of college. But it's not just the ending - it's the parts. A degree is earned one class at a time. Could you take one class right now? With all the online options it's much less time consuming. What would one class cost you? How long before you can budget for it? What are you already spending on continuing education through conferences and other trainings? What if you put that money towards a class instead? It's like that old adage: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

Don't be discouraged from dreaming big! Let this year prove to be your best and shoot for the stars! Set a goal. Set your time line. Set your budget. And start on the details that will get you there one bite at a time. Before you know it, the year will be over, you'll be in new and better place with your business, and you'll have to come up with a dream that's even bigger than this one!

If your dream is to take your business to the next level, get the game plan in my book *From Babysitter to Business Owner* available as part of the KIDBIZ Professionalism Kit on sale now at www.patriciadischler.com!

TIME CAPSULES

A new year is a great time to make a time capsule with the children. Rather than shoot too far ahead, and surpass their patience capabilities, set realistic time frames that will still help them develop patience, discover how time changes many things, and learn about themselves and the world that changes around them, by creating and opening time capsules for each season this year!

Start now with a Winter time capsule. Have the children place in it things that are important to them right now in the winter. Photos of their snowman, a pair of mittens, a wrapped holiday present, a tree ornament, a Valentine, photos of them all bundled up, write down the temperature outside, a game they play inside, etc. Be sure to add a photo of each child and their height too. Wait until the middle of the next season, Spring, to open it. Talk about what has changed. Are they playing the same things? Did they grow? Do they look different? What's changed about what is important to them? Then create the next time capsule for Spring, opening it in the middle of Fall, and so on with each season.

The children will grow in their understanding of the seasons, how they are different not just in how it looks and feels outside, but how they look and feel too during that time of year. They learn patience (which will support creativity!), and how time can affect an outcome. Use a decorated box, old oatmeal can, or whatever container you like and let the children help you to decorate it. You could even use the opening as a reason for a family night to share with the parents what they put inside and how they feel about it!

My New Blog!

I couldn't get the link to work in the last newsletter, so try this: PAT'S BLOG And if that doesn't work try this: www.celebratefailures.blogspot.com. There's been a lot on my

mind lately that I want to write about, that doesn't always fit neatly into my two current categories of writing, child care and adoption. Odd title, I know, but my intent is to share "Lessons in Humility", in other words, that journey we take called life where we make mistakes, or something happens when we think we failed, but in the big picture it was all meant to be and we become a better person. Check it out and it'll make more sense! I'm hoping to post to it at least 2-3 times a week, so check it often for a little pick-me-up inspiration!

Some Nice Resources for You:

Website design for your daycare: www.DesignsByHolee.com

Teacher resources:

www.TeachingWthLove.com

www.NaturallyHappyHealthy.co

NAFCC 2011 Conference

Quest for Quality: Supporting Happy, Healthy Children

Come join me and all the nation's top experts in our field for high quality trainings, networking, and the opportunity to rejuvenate you and your career! We'll be at the beautiful Green Valley Ranch Resort Las Vegas in Henderson, Nevada, July 21-23, 2011. Easy layaway plan available, check it out at: www.nafcc.org and I'll see you there!

This Month's Sale Items

January Sale Item: KIDBIZ Professionalism Kit - 20% Off!

Everything you need to start the year out right! A copy of *From Babysitter to Business Owner, Tips & Tricks*, the *Patty Cake Preschool Parent Handbook CD*, a binder, a one-hour Marketing & Interviews Teleseminar, business card paper, and a wipe-off board. All of my best-selling items put together to get you on the path to professionalism and success!

Regular Price: \$65 Sale Price: \$52

February Sale Item: No Regrets Pregnancy Counseling Booklet - 15% Off!

These cost-efficient booklets are perfect for pregnancy counseling centers, allowing them to put the first three chapters of "Because I Loved You" into the hands of those who need it most. Written to directly speak to those considering their options in an unplanned pregnancy the booklet helps walk the reader through the decision making process to get them to a decision that will be right for them and that they can follow through on with no regrets.

Regular Price: \$40 for a set of 10 Sale Price: \$34

Order yours today at: www.patriciadischler.com or www.KIDBIZResources.com!

Upcoming Events:

March 5, 2011

Chicago Area Families For Adoption (CAFFA) Conference

Lessons Learned from Open Adoption

Wheaton, Illinois

For more information visit: www.caffa.org

March 12, 2011

OURS Through Adoption Conference

Keynote: *Trusting a Stranger for the Sake of a Child*

Workshops: *Lessons Learned from Open Adoption*

Because I Loved You: Understanding a Birthmother's Perspective

Positive Interactions in Adoption

March 26, 2011

CCR&R Full Day Training: *From Babysitter to Business Owner*

Carterville, Illinois

For more information call: 618-985-5986