



# 25 Ways to Market Your Childcare Program

**1** Get your childcare program listed on Google Maps. Google Maps is a free, web-based service that allows you to identify your childcare program location on an online map. You've probably seen Google Maps if you've ever used Google to search for a store or service. For specific instructions, reference the How to Get Listed on Google Maps document located within the How To guides in the Marketing section of this site.

**2** Join The Bump ([www.thebump.com](http://www.thebump.com)), a website devoted to pregnancy, birth, and babies. Once you register, you'll be able to offer your childcare expertise by contributing to the different online communities. They even have an "In Your Area" section which segments baby services, resources, and moms by state.



**3** Create pull-off tab flyers for the local grocery store, laundromat, library, school, church, convenience store bulletin boards - include your program name and phone number on the pull off tab; highlight any specific openings that you may have.

**4** Encourage parents, grandparents, friends and family to refer your service to their friends and relatives - offer incentives such as one week free, or a gift certificate. (Always follow up any referral with a personal thank you.)



**5** Write a childcare article or column for your local paper, or for your hospital newsletter. You want to get your name out to the community and this is a great way to do it.

**6** Hold a community open house. It doesn't need to be elaborate - punch and cookies, a tour of your program. and some fun activities to boost attendance and showcase your great creative learning skills. Be sure to have a sign-up sheet to gather contact information from interested parents; make sure every adult leaves with a business card and/ or brochure. Advertise in the local



paper, tell friends and family, and display a sign out in front of your program a couple of weeks prior, decorated with brightly colored balloons to draw some attention. Did you know that you can buy a targeted list of families within your zip code that have young children living in the household? Consider purchasing a list right from this site and sending each contact a postcard invitation.



**7** Attend community events and local fairs. Set up a booth and hand out flyers and business cards. Consider providing face painting, or something similar to attract children's interest (and thus parents). Ask visitors to complete an entry form with name, address and telephone number and hold a drawing for a free week (or month) of childcare service. Use the information from the entry forms to begin building a contact list.

**8** Get magnetic signs for your car. Make sure they are displayed when you run local errands (post office, grocery store, pharmacy). Have brochures and business cards on hand to provide to people who express interest. Pay your staff or substitutes a small bonus if they display the signs too.



**9** Partner with local businesses that share the same audience such as a home-based toy party representative; invite them to present a demonstration at your open house. Request that they distribute your pamphlets at their parties, and reciprocate at your childcare program. Good choices for partners include baby stores, consignment clothing stores and child play areas and gyms.

**10** Introduce yourself to local businesses. Depending upon the size of the company, you may want to speak with Human Resources. Otherwise simply ask the receptionist if you can leave some business cards in the cafeteria and post a flyer on their bulletin board.



**11** Place an ad in the local paper - offer a discount to those who mention the ad. (Keep track of those responses. There is mixed opinion regarding whether display advertising or classified advertising works best for childcare programs - try both.) *continued on next page*

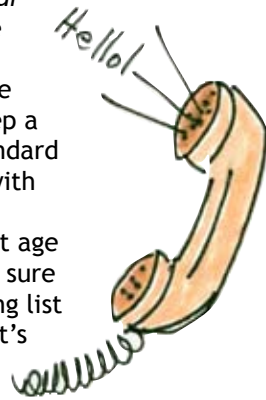
# 25 Ways to Market Your Childcare Program *(continued)*



**12** Connect with local realtors - they are happy to inform clients of childcare providers in the area. And they generally know who's moving into the neighborhood, who has children, and their ages. Likewise, don't forget property management companies - they know who's renting their apartments.

**13** Create an attractive sign and place it outside of your program when you have openings. Decorate it with colorful balloons to draw extra attention. (Be sure to check with your town or city hall regarding sign ordinances.)

**14** Establish a standard telephone and voicemail greeting to make a great first impression. Use something simple that includes your program name and a greeting. (*Hello, ABC Early Learning Program, this is Kathy, how may I help you today? Or You've reached ABC Early Learning Program. We're not available at the moment, but please leave your name, telephone number, and a brief message and we will return your call.*) Be sure to return all telephone calls promptly. If you currently have openings, include them in your phone greeting and voicemail greeting. Keep a note card by the phone with the standard greeting so that others can answer with ease. (Be sure everyone knows how many openings you have, and in what age groups. If there are no openings - be sure to instruct everyone to keep a waiting list of interested parents with the parent's name, email, telephone number, and names and ages of children.)



**15** Many places of worship publish a monthly bulletin or newsletter - buy a small advertisement on the back. Sponsor a children's activity at the annual fair. Be sure to have plenty of brochures and cards available. Volunteer your childcare services during worship services once a month.



**16** Send a press release to your local newspaper announcing the opening of your program or another significant event. Keep it short, focused, and include a photo. Don't forget to include contact information including name, telephone number and email address. (Note: Be sure to

get a signed release form from each person in your photo. For children, have the release signed by a parent or legal guardian.)



**17** Contact your local television station. Many towns have programs highlighting local businesses. See what yours has to offer and where you can fit in. Look at advertising opportunities, as well.

**18** Ask your local pediatrician's office, family practice or OB/Gyn if you can drop off some brochures.



**19** Create a Facebook Fan Page for your childcare program. Facebook is a free website and you can use it to promote your childcare program to an online audience. You can upload text, photos, and videos—everything you need to tell your program's story.

**20** Register with online sites and directories. Use free online classified advertising sites like [www.parenthood.com](http://www.parenthood.com) to promote your program. You get to control the information that you want to display, and you can update it as needed. Many sites also offer affordably priced upgraded listings for even greater exposure. Also, contribute to blogs and other online sources targeted to parenting. Try to target those that are geographically based to reach local families.

**21** Hand out your business cards with the Halloween candy! Talk with parents as they bring their kids up to the door. As you drop a treat in their child's Halloween bag, hand a treat to the parents attached with your business card.



**22** Contact local magazines and see if they run a back-to-school issue - ask about advertising, a mention, or contributing an article.

**23** Consider drop-ins - establish a half-day or full-day charge so parents can try out your service without commitment.

**24** Teach an adult education course on childcare. It's a great way to network, meet new parents and get your name out in the community. It doesn't have to be a lifetime commitment - many programs are flexible and can schedule one-time classes or those lasting just a few weeks.

**25** Place flyers on cars in shopping mall lots (target those with car seats!) - pay attention to local ordinances so you don't break any laws. Toy stores, ball fields and parks with playgrounds are also good candidates for windshield flyers.

