

There is now increasing pressure on settings to use the internet as not only a promotional tool to attract new customers but also to provide information, for current and new customers. A website for your setting will not just help you promote yourself to parents in the local area, but will also allow you to reach out to parents who currently live elsewhere. This is a target audience far outside the scope of any of your other marketing activities.

The internet also allows parents to research these options at a time to suit them i.e. when they have finished work or when the setting is closed. A provider's website can allow parents to see or download a prospectus, find out what activities are undertaken, view a sample of menus, the costs of the childcare, and also arrange a visit. The site can display all of the information that you may already hold in a variety of printed resources. Settings have a vast amount of information for parents but it can sometimes be costly to print everything in the quantities needed. While websites will not totally replace paper copies, it is a great way of bringing all of your information together in a cost effective and more accessible way.

Creating an online presence for your setting does not need to be particularly expensive. A simple professional website can be developed for an outlay of under £100 per year, which is significantly less than it would cost to produce and distribute a glossy brochure. As with all marketing and advertising, it is important to remember that money spent creating a website is an investment, and not a cost. Properly developed, a website for your setting is likely to attract extra parents and children which will repay the initial outlay many times over.

A website is not just an electronic brochure, acting as an advertisement. It helps you communicate more effectively with parents by providing immediate access to new information.

Although operating a website may seem like a daunting task, it can actually be done fairly simply. Thousands of companies offer software tools that hide the technical side of creating web pages. Many website companies specialise in dealing with people who have not had any experience in creating a website before too.

*Website Development and Design* aims to provide you with all the information you need to confidently plan, develop and launch a successful website for your setting. Each chapter provides you with working examples to show you how to create a website. York Way Nursery is a fictional setting, but will practically illustrate the concepts that have been discussed and will give you ideas on ways to apply them to your own website.

Each chapter begins with an example page from some well designed websites.



- HOME
- ABOUT US
- ADMISSIONS
- POLICIES & PROCEDURES
- NUTRITION
- STAFF
- NEWS & EVENTS
- FAQs
- SUPPORT US
- RECRUITMENT & VOLUNTEERING
- GALLERY
- USEFUL LINKS
- CONTACT US

### Welcome to York Way Nursery's website

York Way Nursery, established in 1978, provides a safe and caring environment for babies and young children under five years old. We recognise that each child is different, with his/her own interests, abilities and developing view of the world. We respect the many different forms of family life that children may experience as well as their social and cultural backgrounds. We work in partnership with

parents to develop the best programme of learning and support to benefit their child's overall development. We also provide a range of support, information and advice for parents.

York Way Nursery achieved Outstanding at its latest Ofsted inspection and is undertaking Reflecting on Quality, a recognised quality improvement scheme.

We hope our website will answer all of your queries, although, if not please do get in touch.



### Home page

Your home page will be the first page anyone sees when visiting your website address, so it needs to be welcoming and informative. This is the best place to highlight your unique selling points with a brief introduction to your early years setting. It needs to explain to parents (both prospective and existing), what services your setting provides and what makes you better than others in the local area. Perhaps you have a long history, a purpose-built building or an outstanding Ofsted report. Whatever your setting's unique selling points are, put promoting them at the top of your list. You can go into more detail on your 'About us' page. You could also consider placing a picture of your setting on this page, to make the page visually attractive.

Your home page will also show what else can be found within your website, either by using a list or tabs. Your home page will concentrate on informing your main customer base – parents, about your services. Your tabs or list will direct visitors through to more detailed information, including ways that local businesses can support you.

Many websites do not deliver as expected, not because they have badly written content but because of flaws in their design. Remember for many visitors your website may be the first thing they see about your setting. It is therefore important that you make a very good first impression, which includes the ability for them to be able to find what they are looking for quickly and efficiently.

Creating a website, not only generates the many opportunities discussed in this book, but also provides an ideal opportunity for you to reflect on your setting, and think about what makes your setting unique. Be sure to convey your setting's 'message' i.e. what makes your setting special.

There are several design conventions that most websites use that have become so familiar to internet users that any website that does something different becomes almost unnatural to use. Some of these near universal design choices include:

- 'Contact us' is the last item on the navigation menu.
- Underlining is not used, except on links.

- The navigation menu is placed at the top (when there are only a few choices), or as a column along the left-hand side of the screen.
- Links are styled a different colour than the surrounding text, and are normally underlined when the mouse hovers over them (if not all the time).



Having an online presence, and using this as a promotional tool is a very cheap and effective way to communicate with current and potential customers, funders including your local authority and complementary organisations. You should look at your website as a promotional tool, within a wider promotional or marketing strategy, i.e. looking at all promotional activities to ensure that you reach audiences who favour a particular method of accessing information.

### **Generating interest**

Once your website is developed and most, if not all, of the pages are active, the most important and exciting task is to advertise the site. This can be done in a variety of ways; many ideas will be generated by your website working group, and are likely to include:

- Ensure your web address is present on all letterhead, compliment slips and other stationery; as well as forms, leaflets and other promotional material.
- Request links on other relevant websites e.g. local Families Information Services, careers advice

and resource centres, Citizen Advice Bureaux, libraries, GP surgeries, vocational or community colleges, Government agencies inc. your local council and Sure Start, community network websites and church groups.

- Use your homepage to highlight anything new, with images that will grab visitors' attention. They may have visited your website, but you don't want to lose them before they've even read a single line.
- Send a notification of your new website to all parents, local agencies and organisations, either by email with a link to your website, or via a promotional flyer, which could be left in your local GP surgery.



### **York Way Nursery Website**

York Way Nursery, based in York Way N7, provides a safe and caring environment where babies and young children under five years old will learn and grow. We provide a broad range of challenging and stimulating play activities, both indoors and outdoors, that promote children's overall development.

**[www.yorkway.org.uk](http://www.yorkway.org.uk)**

With quick and easy access to information on our services, you'll also find our newsletters, details of recent and up-and-coming events, photos of activities and current job vacancies.

If you do not have access to the internet, but would like further information please contact us on 0207 697 2500.

Bookmark [www.yorkway.org.uk](http://www.yorkway.org.uk) as one of your favourites now!