



How to welcome and impress parents at your nursery setting



The ultimate guide

Impress New Parents At Your Nursery Setting

A nursery's reputation goes beyond the physical walkaround; word-of-mouth recommendations can significantly boost a setting's popularity amongst parents in the local area.

Nurseries that successfully welcome and impress new and prospective parents have a strong whole-team understanding of what parents look for, their questions, and how to showcase their nursery's strengths.

We spoke to Kate Peach, owner of Each Peach Childcare and co-founder of the esteemed EYFS PeachWell consultancy. Kate gave her expert advice on successfully welcoming and converting walkarounds into clients.



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Impressing Parents: Meet the expert, Kate Peach

Kate has worked in childcare since leaving school, working her way up qualification after qualification to become an Early Years Teacher. She worked for a large childcare company as the CEO for several years before creating Each Peach Childcare; opening her first setting in Hove, Brighton.

Following this success, Kate opened a contrasting forest school setting in Newhaven. Both locations are beautifully run, with children's progress at the heart of every decision. Meeting at an Ofsted conference, Kate and her business partner Jo Cadwell (former HMI Ofsted Inspector) founded Peachwell Consultancy, offering expert advice to all Early Years settings.

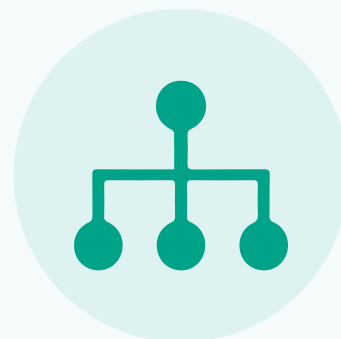
Kate Peach, owner of Each Peach Childcare and co-founder of the esteemed EYFS PeachWell consultancy



Look & Feel



Impression



Structure



Questions

What do parents look for in a nursery?

Parents that attend walkarounds may be first-time parents or families looking to transfer from an existing setting. Every member of your team has a part to play in showcasing your Early Years setting and making a good impression. This is where knowing how to source awesome nursery staff comes into an important role.

Kate, who has over 32 years in the Early Years field, has undertaken countless walkarounds and knows there are common features parents look at when making decisions. We have collated 6 of the key features parents are interested in:



Location



Price



Curriculum



Ethos



Religion



Hours

Your Nursery Setting's Location

Distance is the most common feature taken into consideration when choosing the nursery that is most suitable for their child. Parents must contemplate how convenient the nursery's location is for drop-off and pick-up times to fit around daily schedules. Those who live in more rural areas may have fewer options for Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) setting choices: different locations have different draws for parents.



Prices At Your Setting

With rising living costs, price is a heavy factor when selecting the right nursery for their child. Nurseries must be competitively priced in line with other local settings and be upfront about the features included in the price and those available at additional costs. Some locations may offer a slight reduction in price as part of the sign-up process and may allow discounts for siblings who also attend the nursery. Offering discounts is a great way to [increase occupancy in your setting](#).



Curriculum Your Nursery Offers

Kate warns, “Parents may have a pre-conceived idea of the Early Years curriculum before they attend the nursery. Wanting to know how quickly their child will be writing and counting. It is your role to reset their expectations.”

Most parents are unaware of the [Early Learning Goals](#) and how they are used during the EYFS, and some want to push reading and writing as soon as possible. Explain your EYFS curriculum, the intention, implementation and impact it has on the holistic development of the children during the walkaround.

“Your curriculum should marry with parents’ preferred approach, don’t be afraid to stick to your guns about your curriculum choices.” Kate’s Newhaven site is a rural, forest school setting where Montessori practices underpin the curriculum.

“The children are outside as much as possible, learning and exploring. It may not be every parent’s cup of tea because we aren’t designed with every parent in mind. We love our ethos and see the impact it has.”
Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.



An Ethos To Impress Parents

The nursery should be an extension of the home, with mirrored practices and approaches that complement the child's home life. It is helpful to encourage parents to think about the ethos of your setting and if it aligns with their own. Particularly the rewards system and the methods of learning. Your location may adopt a Curiosity Approach, allowing child-led play and exploration. The parents may also try to adapt flexible play in the home and appreciate the ethos.

Your Nursery Setting And Religion

Early Years settings that are prominent in a particular faith can be attractive to parents who would like continuity between home and education. Equally, many nurseries ensure a variety of religions are explored in their learning, some focusing on this topic more than others.



Discuss Your Nursery's Hours With Parents

Depending on your operating hours and type of nursery, you may find your demographic of families is working parents. Meaning longer operating hours to fit in with their working schedules may be attractive when deciding. Some settings may also offer childcare for older siblings who attend local primary schools, allowing working parents the convenience of one pick-up location after work.



What Are Parents Impressed By On Nursery Walkarounds?

Indoor Space At Your Setting

Indoor space covers all learning environments, the reception, and the facilities inside the setting. Parents are impressed when they see a variety of learning resources readily available. It can be beneficial to show parents just how versatile one resource can be, especially loose parts play materials. Showcase your role play areas, celebrating the diversity with gender-equal role-play opportunities you organise for the children.

Begin your walkaround tour at the area of most interest for the parents; if they want to join with their 18-month baby, the baby room will be the first stop. "Parents need to be shown the whole nursery as well as their age group of interest. Begin with the important rooms first but let them take in the whole setting- where their child will progress to," Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.



Outdoor Space Available At Your Nursery

The outdoor space available will differ between settings and can be a real selling point or equally an area of limitation. Kate recommends knowing your limits and working hard to turn them into positives. Parents are impressed with any all-weather play facilities, covered play and exploration areas in particular. This can be an excellent time to explain how curiosity and risk-managed play are involved in your curriculum.



Additional Features To Impress Parents

Think about what sets your nursery apart from others: it may be your exceptional staff, surroundings, ethos, or facilities. Share what makes your nursery unique during the visit. For example, Kate has a 'discovery room' in her Hove setting, a multi-use space that facilities awe and wonder. Now is the time to share any awards or recognitions your nursery might be proud of – nothing is too small.

Your Nursery's Food Options

Parents feed their children a balanced diet, introducing them carefully to new foods and textures. Handing the reins over can be a struggle for some. Therefore you should give prospective parents the confidence that their child will be given healthy, fresh and nutritious food they will love when they are in your care.

"Parents are impressed when you can be as personalised and tailored as possible. We often ask for dietary needs and preferences, show parents the current menu timetable and see if it would be practical to alter it slightly to fit their child's preferences," Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.



★ Impress Parents From The Very Beginning

An area of feedback given on Kate's own nurseries as well as recognised in those she has supported, is the importance of supporting the parents with any questions they have before the visit even begins.

Many parents from her settings remark about their positive interactions, even from the first phone call. Walking into a new setting can be daunting but speaking to a friendly staff member on the phone can help reduce parental anxiety about what type of welcome they will receive.

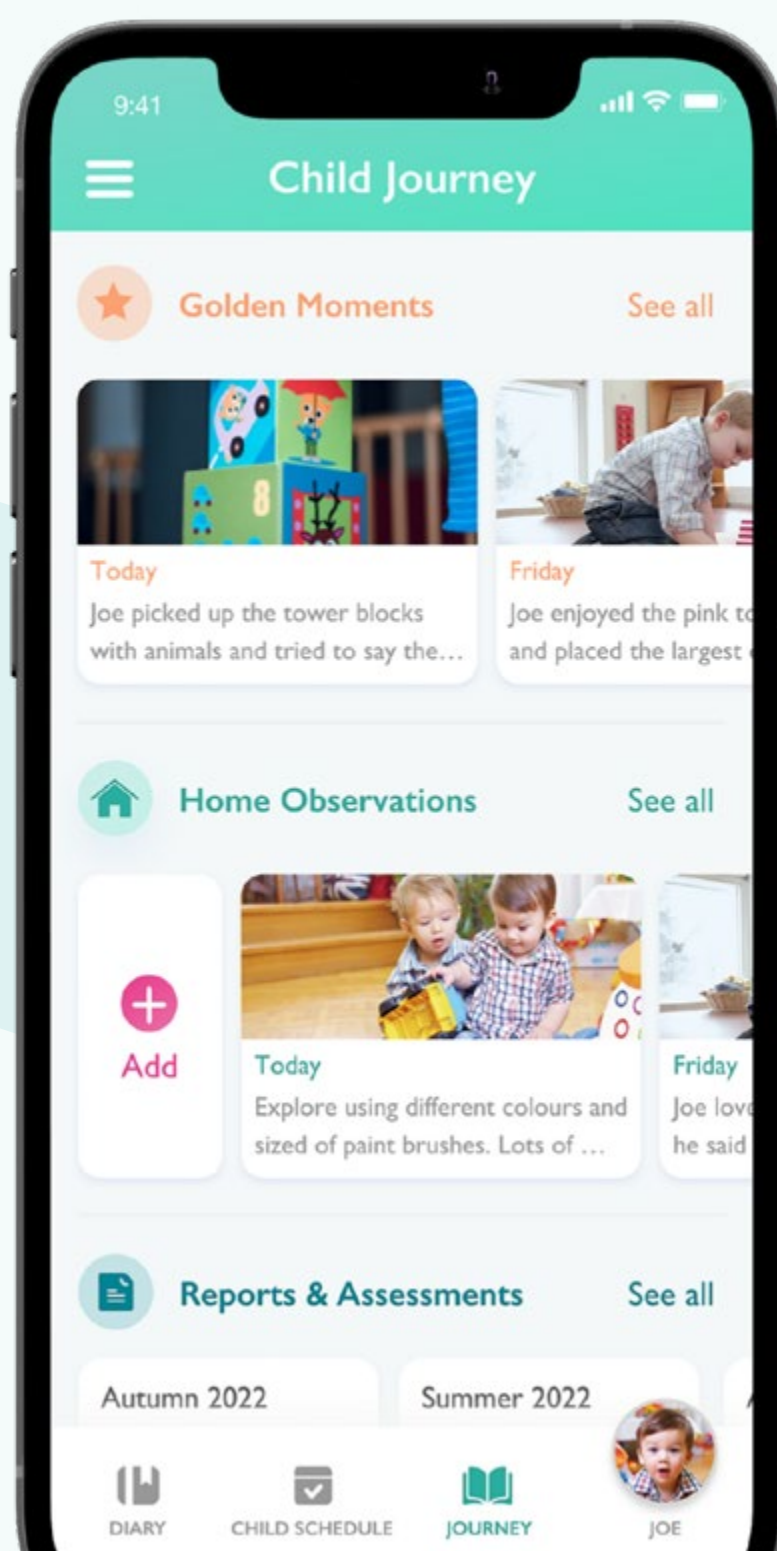
Similarly, when the parents arrive in the building, every team member must be encouraged that it is not solely the manager's role to welcome and greet the parents. A quick check if they have spoken to anyone yet can put the most nervous of parents at ease as well as confirm the high level of approachability and professionalism that is expected across all team members.

Parents will closely observe the general manner of all staff members throughout the visit; all staff should smile, say 'hello' when walking past guests, be engaged with the children and interact with other staff showing a respectful and positive attitude.



Show Communication Systems and Nursery Software

Communication is key to supporting anxious parents. By sharing important documents (policies, administrative forms) as well as updates on their child's day and progress this provides any parent with comfort and instils trust. Share your communication platform that your setting uses to put parents' minds at ease. As they know they will have quick contact with their key worker and senior staff, with bonus add-ons of easy online fee payments.



What Is The Best Structure For An Early Years Setting Show-around?

Timing Of Your Setting's Show-Arounds

Parents will appreciate your setting being accommodating to work around their schedules, but you must ensure that being flexible also works for your setting. Kate and her management team recommend avoiding booking walkarounds during key busy times throughout the day: lunch, nap, and pick-up times.

“Don’t put yourself at a disadvantage by booking in walkarounds during lunchtime, when you know it is one of the busiest times of the day. Or, if you have to do a visit, then set parents’ expectations before they see the joyful chaos.” *Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.*



Ensure All Nursery Staff Can Deliver

In Kate's nurseries, the Manager or Deputy Manager deliver the walkarounds as they are best placed to answer any tricky questions the families may ask and know the operational nitty gritty of the setting. Kate stresses that all staff should be aware of the aims and importance of a walkaround,

“Everyone in the team should be able to confidently run a walkaround, knowing the setting's strengths and ethos.” *Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.*

Walkaround procedure and delivery should be part of your nursery's CPD journey, especially if your nursery has places due to become available in the next academic year.

Following Up After Nursery Open Days

Walkarounds can be run in small groups or individually; this structure will depend on the availability of staff and may coincide following the delivery of a successful and profitable open day. During the open day, you can encourage sign-ups to walkarounds to see the areas they are most interested in, in more detail.



What Common Questions Are Asked On EYFS Walkarounds?

Are All Of Your Staff Qualified?

A topic regularly discussed in the media and can easily be misunderstood; Kate finds parents commonly query the qualifications of your staff. When the government altered the requirement checklist needed to be deemed Level 4 and 3 in childcare, it devalued many experienced team members' qualifications.



“Parents don’t often understand that the government may say a diploma that was studied for 10–20 years ago is now not recognised professionally, but these staff members have invaluable experience and worked hard for those qualifications. They are no less qualified.”

Kate explains perfectly the need to share the skills your team has together as well as qualifications, “Parents want their children to be supported by knowledgeable, empathetic and nurturing people; a piece of paper doesn’t always recognise those skills.”

Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.



How Are Ratios Organised?

Another common media discussion is the difficulties nurseries experience when keeping within ratio. Suppose you are asked this question during a visit; you can explain that you follow the statutory requirements and that you and the SENDCo work very closely together to ensure any additional support that might be needed is investigated.

How Long Have Your Staff Worked Here?

Parents can gain large votes of confidence when they learn that some staff members have been at the setting for an extended time, knowing the procedures, setting and children exceptionally well.

For those staff members new to the team, celebrate the experience they have brought with them from working elsewhere or from their personal life (they may have their own children, travel extensively, and have hobbies and interests).

“It can reassure parents when I can say that I’ve worked with my managers since the nursery first opened its doors”,
*Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and
Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.*



What Additional Qualifications Do Your Staff Have?

The nursery will follow the statutory guidance with paediatric first aid and medical training but don't take it for granted that the parents are aware of this. Boost confidence further by explaining the first aid training procedures and how conscious your staff are of any safeguarding concerns.

Celebrate any additional training your team may have participated in (as a whole setting or individually); this might be inclusion-focused, British Sign Language or Makaton or as part of your setting's tailored CPD journey.



What Is Your Nursery's Behaviour Policy?

This is a valuable policy to have easily accessible on the website or via your communication platform. The nursery's behaviour policy should cover the reward systems used and how to manage behaviour displayed outside the expected toddler behaviour. During the visit, explain early on the mentally healthy habits and reflective practice you encourage.



How Does Your Nursery Encourage Reading and Writing?

The Early Learning Goals can be referred to when asked this question to give context for the learning requirements your nursery works towards. Celebrate and showcase, if possible, the early love for reading you encourage through various stimuli.

You may share with your parents some excellent books for them to read to their child to spark this curiosity for reading. Parents may benefit from investigating the types of materials and resources the child can play with in your setting, possibly pointing out how these play techniques build dexterity and pincer grips to aid writing.



How Do You Prepare Children For Primary School?

As preparations for primary school selection begin as early as two, this is a question Kate and her team are asked repeatedly. The reiteration of the underpinning message of play and exploration is useful to remind parents of the academic expectations during EYFS. Highlight the essential ways you ready children for the next educational step: social skills, independence, tidying and responsibility, conflict resolution, confidence, managed risk-taking, and personal hygiene and care.



Are There Links With Other Settings?

Kate reminds us to be aware of your nursery's strengths and areas of limitation. "My nursery in Hove is in an urban setting and doesn't have as much outdoor space as I'd like. So we make connections, we regularly visit the three local schools nearby and use their facilities, including a forest for forest school.

We link with the secondary school to help with their attendance reward scheme, which lets the children interact with new friends. There is a local care home nearby, so we tie it all together and visit there with the secondary students too; the children and parents love it." Kate Peach, Owner of Each Peach Childcare and Co-Founder of PeachWell Consultancy.

Do The Children Go On Trips and Visits?

Shout about it if you can access a minibus or public transport to expand children's learning experiences! Share with the parents the previous and planned trips you organise and, importantly, explain the reasons for the trips. Link the concrete learning to your setting's curriculum, showing the need for practical knowledge and multi-sensory engagement.



How Do You Support A Child With SEND?

Many hidden disabilities don't show identifiable traits until between the ages of 12–18 months. Your team may be the first professionals to identify and assess their child's additional needs; parents may likely ask how children are supported.

Explain during their visit that inclusion underpins all practices in your setting. And give confidence by sharing the special educational needs professionals you are involved with to secure the best support and advice for the children in your setting.

Additional meetings can be planned with the SENDCo to discuss further SEND-related questions. Showcasing the sensory play you organise for the children during the visit can demonstrate your understanding of the benefits this has for children with sensory processing difficulties.



★ Let The Journey Begin!

It can be challenging to meet every parent's expectation or checklist when they are visiting nursery settings to make a choice for their child's first educational steps. You must have confidence and passion for your setting's ethos and approach to learning; these will shine through during your walkarounds.

To see how [Blossom Educational](#) can help you to engage parents more effectively, contact one of our expert team members.

