

Successful Tours for Prospective Parents

- Have a script (at least in your head). Know what features of your program you plan to cover and how to show your program in the best light to each tour audience.
- Prepare by experiencing the program through the senses of the parents. “Why is it so cluttered looking?” “What is that smell?” “Why is it so loud?” “Do the children always cry this much?” You are used to the real world of your program and the experience of active learning in a group setting; they are not.
- Sit down with parents prior to touring, and get to know them.
- Listen to prospective parents: What are they interested in? What are their concerns? Solicit their questions and concerns, and get a sense of how they will view your program.
- Recognize that all parents are different. Don’t give the same tour to the expecting first-time parent and the toddler’s parent or to parents from a different culture and parents who brought a child’s grandparent along.
- Know your program, its strengths and weaknesses. Know how to present your limitations in a reasonable fashion.
- Be honest. Good programs don’t need to hide the limitations of group care or the struggles to produce quality with limited resources. Good programs don’t need to pretend to be something they are not. If you lead parents to expect something you can’t deliver, you will have serious problems after they enroll their child.
- Involve the staff. Introduce staff in each room and sing their praises. Make sure staff look pleasant, greet both parents and child, and show interest in having a new family.