

City of Canada Bay Child Friendly Guide For Businesses



> Child Friendly Guide



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City of Canada Bay Council



Message from the Mayor

This guide is intended to provide practical information and advice to businesses on how to implement and manage a child friendly environment in ways that benefit their business and the local community.

Recent statistics show that we have over 15,000 families located in the Canada Bay Council Local Government Area. The recent Census data indicates a 12% growth in the number of children between birth and 9 years. This is a prime market of potential customers you may be missing out on!

Council is committed to supporting businesses to maximise benefits from this market and enable families to experience the best precincts in the local community.

Council's Bayside Business Development Program is committed to creating a vibrant economy and supporting business growth. We aim to position City of Canada Bay as the best place for businesses to establish and grow. We encourage the development and support of local businesses.

To do this we are providing businesses with this useful guide.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Angelo Tsirekas". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mayor Angelo Tsirekas
City of Canada Bay





Introduction to child friendly

What is a child friendly business?

A child friendly business or organisation is one that welcomes children and supports parents and caregivers in the sometimes challenging task of shopping and accessing business and services. Child friendly businesses and organisations recognise that sometimes people need to shop with prams, wheelchairs and young children, and that some people have more difficulty than others in using commercial and retail services.

Why is child friendliness good for business?

For many people, the experiences of children, shopping and community life are linked. Families need to shop and eat, and many studies point to children as having increasing influence over their family's spending patterns.

Good access makes good business sense!

Families are potential customers; each will make choices about your business based on how easy it is to use. If a mother has a pram or stroller and there is a step at your front entrance, they and the people who accompany them, will probably go to another business in your area which has a flat entrance or a ramp. Additionally, if they find your staff unhelpful they probably won't come back to your business.

However if you make an effort to provide corridors free of clutter (i.e. boxes fallen over), then people will appreciate the ease of shopping at your business.

Remember – what you do to improve accessibility doesn't have to be expensive – a combination of providing easier entry and improving staff training will go a long way to making your business more attractive to many people including families.

Retail and commercial business facts and ideas

Did you know?

Customers stay & spend more when their children are safely occupied.* 91% of parents who shop with their children leave the store because they are distracted by their children.*

What impact is that having on your sales?

Let's think about it – a car dealership loses at least one sale every week because parents are distracted by their children and tend to leave rather than complete the purchase. At an average sale of \$40,000, that's a \$2 million impact on sales every year.

What about your store?

You may be losing \$50 a day in sales because mums and dads can't stay in your store. That's \$18,000 in potential annual revenue.

By occupying children safely in-store, you will not only have a positive impact on your bottom line, you will also be creating a more customer-friendly environment that will attract and retain additional customers.

* Research conducted in an online survey in Nov 2004 through Child Friendly Solutions Pty Ltd.



General information for all business

Tips for businesses on how to become child friendly

- Have a welcoming, friendly attitude to all customers and their children.
- Provide spaces and doors that are easy to access with a pram or wheelchair.
- Ensure aisles are wide and easy to navigate around corners.
- Ensure paths are not blocked with unnecessary obstacles.
- Minimum steps or platforms.
- Provide doors that open easily with one hand.
- Provide a safe play area with commercial play equipment that conforms to Australian Standards.
- Provide a box of finger wipes available for sticky little hands.
- Assist people with prams and wheelchairs when necessary.

- Provide parking spaces for parents with young children.

- Offer parcel pick-up/home delivery.

- Provide baby feeding area and or a nappy change area.

- Make available high chairs and or booster seats.

- Provide toilets/bathrooms.

- Offer children's menu options.

Suggestions on what not to do when providing for children in your business

For businesses that are providing a number of child friendly initiatives in their business, following are suggestions on how to keep children and your business safe:

- Many toys and all crayons or chalk can present a choking hazard for small children. You cannot always control what age child will have access to those toys and some of them will be too young for the toys you are providing.

- Loose toys are a tripping hazard, not only for children, but for other customers.

- A small table and chairs are often an invitation for children to climb.

- As the owner of a retail or commercial entity, you are legally responsible, under Occupational Health & Safety Regulations for the safety of your workers and visitors to your premises, including children. As with any business, if a child is harmed in your store, whether or not it is your fault, the responsibility rests with you, which also exposes you to a significant legal liability.





Teach sales staff how to interact with children

Many sales staff, particularly younger people, have not had exposure to small children and may be uncertain how to deal with a customer who brings children into the store. Here are a few tips you can pass on to them so that they feel more confident, and the customer gets a great experience.

- A friendly greeting to both parent and child goes a long way and doesn't take much effort.
- When you or your staff greet a child, get down to their level and say "hi" with a big smile, without getting too close. Children respond to a smile but shy away or get upset if you get "in their face".
- If the parent is trying something on, ensure the child is in the change room with him or her. Whilst it is not advisable to offer to look after the child whilst mum or dad is changing, let the parent know that you'll man the exits, just in case there's an escape attempt! It'll give them peace of mind just knowing you're keeping an eye out.

- If a child starts to create havoc in your store, politely let the parent know and ask them to take the child's hand. Unfortunately, if someone is injured in your store because of the actions of an unruly child, the liability rests with you – the store owner – so it's in your interests to ensure the parent controls the child. Never touch a child yourself unless the parent has given you permission.
- If it's within your scope, keep a jar of little gifts you can give away to children. Remember, they are your customers of the future so you want them to associate your store with pleasant memories. Lollies aren't always appreciated by parents and can be controversial, but fun stickers are a good idea – children love them and they're inexpensive. Just make sure to get the parent's permission as the child might be younger than you think and put them straight in their mouth!

How to become a breastfeeding friendly business

The Australian Breastfeeding Association has introduced a "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" sticker and kit that has been produced to improve community acceptability of breastfeeding in public through the accreditation and promotion of breastfeeding friendly businesses.

For more information go to **Australian Breastfeeding Association**
www.breastfeeding.asn.au
Ph: (03) 9885 0855.

WorkCover - Safety Solutions Rebate Program

The New South Wales Government, via its WorkCover program, is offering businesses a rebate on any safety solution that you introduce into your store. This includes play equipment that is safe and prevents accidents from occurring. WorkCover will pay half for the cost of whatever solution (as long as it is safe) that you introduce into your business.

For more information go to www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/safebusiness



How to create a child friendly retail business

Create a child friendly retail environment that can increase your sales

Most Australian retailers agree that having children in a store can be something of a headache, and yet it is unavoidable facts that, every day, thousands of Australian parents have to go shopping with their children in tow. Usually, they grab what they need and they leave the store. No browsing, no impulse buying – it's just all too hard with small children. And that means millions of dollars in lost sales to retail businesses every year.

But there is a way you can turn this pitfall of retail life to your advantage, allowing you to keep those customers in the store longer and provide them with a superior level of customer service – become a "child friendly" retailer. It's not as expensive, difficult, or intrusive to your store design as you might think. Thankfully, there are now some retailer-friendly options available to occupy children. And by providing a child-friendly retail environment you will be able to capture a market that is ready and willing to spend, but not always able – mums and dads with children.

Become known as a child friendly retailer

Becoming a child friendly retailer is another tool you can use in your marketing toolbox to differentiate and promote your business.

Many parents seek out child friendly establishments and there are websites and publications dedicated to helping mums and dads find your store. To find out more contact council.

CASE STUDY: LJ Hooker Drummoyne

LJ Hooker Drummoyne is a local business that has embraced the "child friendly" concept and implemented initiatives to allow their sales staff time with families without being distracted by children. The company offers a range of novelty items such as Mr Hooker Bear colouring in books, pencils, stamps and drink bottles to keep children occupied. As Sir Leslie Joseph Hooker said "Real Estate is not about houses, it's about people" and this is the direction LJ Hooker Drummoyne has taken.

CASE STUDY: Rhodes Shopping Centre

Rhodes Shopping Centre is one of Sydney's newest shopping destinations. The centre has applied many different ideas for occupying children and understands the importance of attracting mums to their shopping centre. Rhodes Shopping Centre has implemented the following initiatives:-

- Fun play area featuring slides, interactive play panels, climbing gyms & tunnels. The play area is suitable for children aged 1-5 years and is conveniently located next door to a café for mum and dad to relax.
- Stroller service is available free of charge.
- Tots Taxis are available for hire for a nominal fee.
- The food court has a special designated area for parents and their children that offer high chairs play panels and children's play equipment.
- Rhodes Shopping Centre offers a Mighty Monkeys Kids Club for children and also runs a popular Mumz & Bubz Club for parents with infants.
- Reading Cinemas at Rhodes features two fully equipped crying rooms so that parents can enjoy the latest blockbusters in the privacy of an acoustically sealed room. The crying rooms are in prime viewing areas of the two main cinemas and provide parents and their children with a unique environment to enjoy the latest movies.
- Rhodes Shopping Centre has 2 fully equipped parents rooms. Each parent room offers private feeding areas, change tables, microwaves, TV's, nappy bins and children's toilets.
- Parents with Prams parking is also available

Paul Pozzobon, Marketing Manager of Rhodes Shopping Centre said "Since day one, Rhodes Shopping Centre has utilised various child-friendly initiatives to make children and their families feel welcome each and every time they visit. All of these initiatives have proven very popular with our customers and in fact, prove a valuable point of difference between ourselves and our competitors!"



CASE STUDY: IKEA

IKEA loves children and considers them to be some of their most important customers. So that's why IKEA stores are so child-friendly and both parents and children can enjoy the shopping experience. A big favourite at IKEA is the fabulous SMALAND supervised children's play area for children aged 3 to 10 years. There's also the great value IKEA Restaurant where children can play while their parents enjoy a meal. The Restaurant also offers a tasty selection of healthy children's meals and organic baby food, plus high chairs, bottle warmers, microwave ovens and free disposable bibs. IKEA also has a nursing area for breastfeeding mums, and other baby changing facilities.



How to create a child friendly restaurant/ café/eatery

Tips for restaurants and eateries on how to become more child friendly

What are the best ways to make sure that your restaurant or eatery is child-friendly? How can you be sure to attract adults who want to eat out with children? This is a lucrative and important part of the restaurant audience, so follow the easy list below to gain additional customers.

Cheerful, easy to clean decor

The first thing that will signal customers that it's okay to bring children in, is a bright, cheerful, casual decor that incorporates woods, leather and vinyl, heavy duty carpeting, tiles and other easy to clean surfaces that will take spills and knocks.

Child friendly menu offerings

Offer child sized portions and prices, if you charge for children to eat. Generally, children 6 and under eat free, children 7 - 11 eat for half price and teens 12 and up eat at full price, though you may want to offer free dessert to entice families with teenagers to come in with their family.

Offer a separate children's menu if you don't want to list child-friendly items on your regular adult menu.

Child friendly seating

Make sure to have a couple of high chairs and booster seats available.

Easy ingress and egress for strollers and toddlers

If you intend to attract families with small children and/or the older crowd or those in wheelchairs, make sure you don't have too many places where steps are the only option. Try incorporating ramps whenever possible.

Offer some children's activities

If you use white butcher block paper to put over your tablecloths, the little ones can colour while their parents are eating. You can buy inexpensive colouring books and crafts to hand out to children from commercial promotion companies.

Offer something special for children

Whether it's a special treat they get at the end of the meal, the activity book they're given when they sit down or the balloon they get when they enter, give something special to children.

Spread word of mouth that you're child friendly

Once people know that you don't mind having children in your restaurant and, in fact, welcome them, word will spread.

Promote with other child friendly partners

If you really want to attract children to fill in early morning, afternoon and evening seatings, promote yourself to nearby children's attractions and businesses. Every parent knows the places that cater to children in their area, and if you put some of your menus or a sign in these stores that you welcome children, parents will give you a try.

Make your restrooms child friendly

Just putting a change table in your restroom will attract adults with children, once the word spreads. If you have unisex bathrooms, put a change table on the floor or attach a fold-down version to a wall.





Healthy menu suggestions

The average Australian family spends nearly 15% of their food budget on fast food and/or takeaway food. These foods are not always nutritious and regular, excessive consumption may contribute to poor health.

With implementing a healthy menu for children you can assist with the reduction of childhood obesity, heart disease and high blood pressure.

Some food retailers are making changes to their cooking methods and ingredients, to improve the nutritional quality of their meals. Occasionally, choosing small portions of these items can be part of a balanced diet.

Some healthier menu options that can be included are:

- Tomato-based sauces with pasta
- Thin crust pizza with vegetable or seafood toppings
- Plain hamburgers with salad (leave out the cheese or bacon)
- Sushi
- Grilled fish and salad
- Chicken or meat kebabs with vegetables

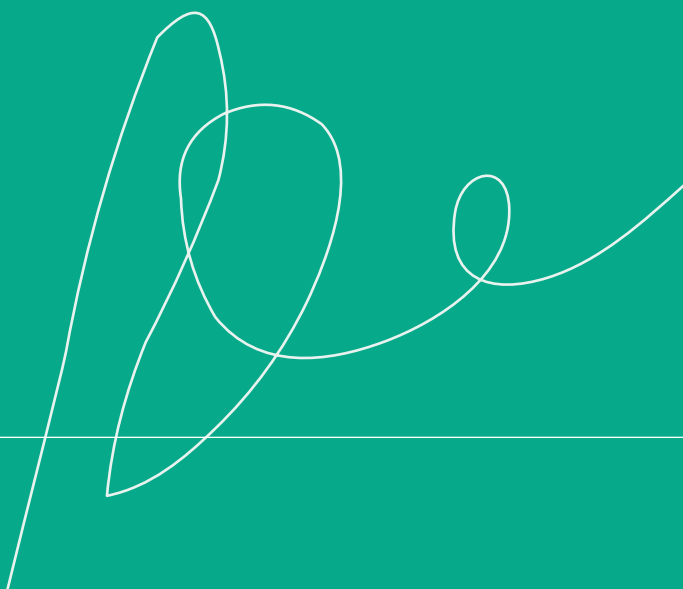
For more information or ideas on recipes go to:
www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

CASE STUDY: Club Five Dock

Eating out should be an enjoyable experience with children, Club Five Dock has this down pat, they have introduced a number of initiatives to showcase their club as being child friendly, by offering a child meal deal which features free gelato and drink with every child meal purchase.

Additionally, there is a children's play room, where the children can amuse themselves, high chairs are available and change facilities.

The Three Peppers Bistro is now catering for mothers groups, this venue has plenty of space for pram access and offers daily specials for both mothers and children that are at an affordable price.





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