

CHILD FRIENDLY BUSINESS

CHILD
FRIENDLY
GUIDE FOR
BUSINESSES





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 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 Place Management Program is committed to creating a vibrant community and supporting local business growth. We aim to position City of Canada Bay as the best place in the inner west to live work and play. We encourage the development and support of local businesses to improve our community for residents and visitors.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angelo Tsirekas".

Mayor Angelo Tsirekas
City of Canada Bay

Contents

Message from the Mayor	2
Introduction to Child Friendly	4
What is a Child Friendly Business?	6
Why is child friendliness good for businesses?	6
Good access makes good business sense!	6
Don't lose customers	7
Manage your risk	7
Tips for businesses on how to become child friendly	8
Suggestions on what not to do when providing for children in your business	9
Teach sales staff how to interact with children.	9
How to become a breastfeeding friendly business	10
WorkCover – Safety Solutions Rebate Program	10
How to create a child friendly retail business	11
Create a child friendly retail environment that can increase your sales.	11
Become known as a child friendly retailer	11
CASE STUDY: LJ Hooker Drummoyne	11
CASE STUDY: Rhodes Shopping Centre	12
CASE STUDY: IKEA	12
How to create a child friendly restaurant/café/eatery	13
Tips for restaurants and eateries on how to become more child friendly	13
CASE STUDY: Club Five Dock	15
Source links	15



Introduction to child friendly

While the City of Canada Bay (CCB) has always been a popular area for families, the 2011 Census reveals that there have been significant increases in the number of children in the City in recent years, and that the overall population of CCB has increased faster than any other local government authority (LGA) in NSW. The Census also reveals that there has been a substantial increase in the numbers of children growing up in medium and high density housing in the area. The investigation of child and family needs was informed by this backdrop of a rapidly growing population, increased numbers of children and families, and changes in housing density.

CCB population is very similar to that of the Greater Sydney population for the 0-4 year old group, and lower for the 5-14 year age group. The proportion of 0-4 year olds in the total population has increased by 0.6%, from 6.3% in 2006 to 6.9% in 2011. The rate of growth in numbers of 0-4 year old children has increased from a substantial 19% between 2001 and 2006 to an even higher increase of 25% between 2006 and 2011. The villages and town centres in CCB provide valued meeting and socialising places for children and families.

Respondents to a recent survey in Five Dock found that 82% considered the town centre to be a family oriented environment. Apart from family friendly features such as providing play spaces in shopping centres (such as the playground in Fred Kelly Place, Five Dock), Council encourages local businesses to consider child and family needs through its Child Friendly Guide for Businesses.

This Guide contains practical information and advice to business owners on how to implement and manage a child friendly environment to ensure best service is delivered to their customers.

It includes tips for businesses wanting to make their premises more accommodating for children through such things as; providing baby feeding or nappy change areas, high chairs or booster seats, parking, and good pram access.

In 2007, Council won the Child Friendly Council Challenge award from the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), for the development of this guide as part of its Child Friendly Business Program. In addition, an annual award is presented to the best child friendly business in the City. The place based approach to town centres incorporates child and family needs in the development of these centres. For example the recent Five Dock Place Plan (2012) identified a raft of strategies to enhance the family friendly environment, including improving provision of public toilets, baby change facilities, pram ramps, parent parking and children's play spaces. Other family friendly suggestions included family days, encouraging businesses to respond to family needs (for example providing high chairs, flexible seating and pram access), and enhancing a sense of safety through improved lighting and opportunities for passive surveillance.

The Rhodes Place Plan (2013) has undertaken an extensive program of community engagement to assist in the Plan's development, including many suggestions from families about the types of facilities, services and activities that could be provided in the community precinct, Central Park, Town Square and open space areas of the Peninsula. For example, some of the family friendly initiatives being considered in the Plan include a multipurpose indoor/outdoor space to support a range of child and family activities; a community garden; water features for children's play; child and family-friendly design; a shaded children's playground and upgraded walking and bicycle paths within the Peninsula that link to other destinations and networks.



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, dining and accessing businesses and services. Child friendly businesses and organisations recognise that sometimes people need to shop with prams, wheelchairs and young children, and that some people may have more difficulty than others in using commercial and retail services.

Why is child friendliness good for businesses?

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.

A marketing expert estimates 'that kids influence between 25 and 40 per cent of all household purchases.' Kid Power!

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.



Don't lose customers

Customers stay and 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



Manage
your risk

As the owner of a retail or commercial entity, you are legally responsible, under Occupational Health and 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. Bored or unruly children can create risks. A child friendly business creates safe spaces and activities to help families enjoy your services and minimise risks from children running and climbing around your premises.





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
- Minimise 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 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
- Maintain good surveillance so you or your staff can address any risky behaviours

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 the following are suggestions on how to keep children and your business safe:

- Many toys and all crayons and 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. Have a range of options available for parents to guide children to.
- Loose toys are a tripping hazard, not only for children, but for other customers, maintain a safe place for these items.
- A small table and chairs are often an invitation for children to climb, address risks around this space.



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 can 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 on 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 parents 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. That 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 to 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 an unavoidable fact 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 Waterside

Rhodes Waterside 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 Waterside 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 Waterside offers a Mighty Monkeys Kids Club for children and also runs a popular Mumz & Bubz club for parents with infants.
- Reading Cinemas at Rhodes Waterside 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 Waterside 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 Waterside said:

"Since day one, Rhodes Waterside 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

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that household spend on meals away from home has jumped more than 55 per cent in real terms since the 1980s, from \$42 per week in 1984 to \$66 in 2010.

Where households spent around one-fifth of their weekly food budget on eating out in 1984, today that figure is closer to one-third.ⁱⁱ



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 décor

The first thing that will signal customers that it's okay to bring children in, is bright, cheerful, casual décor 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 wherever possible.

• 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 that 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 foodⁱⁱⁱ. 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 and vegetable 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, breast feeding facilities and change facilities.

Their 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.



ⁱ https://books.google.com.au/books?id=t4AqUUv814oC&pg=PA224&lpg=PA224&dq=A+marketing+expert+estimates+%E2%80%98that+kids+influence+between+25+and+40+per+cent+of+all+household+purchases.%E2%80%99+Kid+Power&source=bl&ots=oUkUtAZ1mh&sig=GJjxD-jLWiaZz3ibZFqVroul_IYQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=xOrzVPT9EuXbmgXFnyII&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=A%20marketing%20expert%20estimates%20%E2%80%98that%20kids%20influence%20between%2025%20and%2040%20per%20cent%20of%20all%20household%20purchases.%E2%80%99%20Kid%20Power&f=false

ⁱⁱ <http://www.goodfood.com.au/good-food/food-news/how-australia-eats-the-ultimate-pie-chart-20131102-2wstm.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://daa.asn.au/for-the-public/smart-eating-for-you/nutrition-a-z/fast-food-and-take-away/>

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