Increasing Enrollment
and Enhancing Parent Engagement
Using Social Media and Online Communication Tools

Fran Simon, M.Ed.

#ECEwebinars
About me:
Fran Simon, M.Ed.

* Former Child Care Administrator
* Marketing
* Webinars
* Author
* Social Media
* Tech Dev
* Engaged Strategies, LLC

Early Childhood Investigations
Today we will cover--

• What parents care about and need
• Enrolled families vs. parents seeking care
• Digital techniques
• Overview of social media
• Facebook, Pinterest
• (and maybe) Twitter, LinkedIn
It is not about the technology, the tools, or the media.

This is about relationships.
Before they enroll, and once they are enrolled... it is critical to engage families

* Educating * Demonstrating * Marketing *

* Outreach * Promotion *

* Advertising * Informing *

* Recruiting * Persuading *

* Educating * Demonstrating * Marketing *
Why Engage? Family-School Engagement

Research Says ...

* positive outcomes * school-readiness *

* increased motivation * higher self esteem *

* lower suspension rates *

* less violent behavior *

* better graduation rates *

PROGRAM RETENTION!

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What parents care about
All parents, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, gender, class, socio-economic status, or culture, want, need, and expect the same things from their child’s earliest learning experiences...
Parents **expect** their children to be **physically** and **emotionally safe**...

...to be **loved** and to **belong** in a community.

...to be encouraged to **feel good about themselves**.

...to be appreciated for their unique and special qualities

...to **learn in enriching environments**
Do you communicate with parents based on what you know they need, want and expect? Do you listen as much as you talk?

-OR-

Do you tell them what you need them to know?
# 80 / 20 Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80%</th>
<th>20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child-specific, personal, individualized</td>
<td>Need to know, instructions, details, group-centric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>Inform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why are online communication tools so important for enrolling and engaging parents?
Information moves at the speed of light

Parents are overloaded!
Digital natives expect everything at their fingertips. To engage you have to do so on their terms.
The connection between your website, social media, and enrollment
REPEAT AFTER ME...

Every program must have a website

AND

Parents MUST be able to find and use it
Your website is the hub!
DIY and Semi-Custom

- Internal I/T
- Contract developers

Custom

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Hubs/Forums - Internal Website tools for school to family and family to family communication
Engaging in a digital world
Poll
Your relationship with social media
If you could have only one reason to use social media to impact enrollment, it should be SEO and traffic to your site.
SEO = Search Engine Optimization
If you could have only one reason to use social media to impact family engagement, it would be to Reach families how, when, and where they communicate.
Before Social Media

One               To                                            Many

EVOLUTION

Now

Many to Many

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Communication Evolution

Before Social Media
Push out messages

Social Wisdom
Inviting INTERACTION
Listening

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Parent Engagement Evolution

Conventional Wisdom

• Tell
• Inform
• Educate

Social Wisdom

• Invite to engage with you
• Give them reasons to say good things
• Help them engage with one another
Social Media Myths from the resisters!

- Having a website is enough!
- It’s frivolous.
- It’s just for kids.
- We will lose control.
- It’s a distraction.
- Privacy! Yikes!
Social Media Myths from the happy camp!

- It’s easy!
- It’s FREE!
- It’s INSTANT!
- College kids are gr8 at it!
- Build it and they will come.
- It will increase ENROLLMENT!
Social Media Realities

- It is pervasive
- It is high-impact
- It’s just 21st century communication

- IT ENHANCES SEO & TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE!
Professional Social Media

is art and science that takes:

• Openness
• Planning
• Policies
• Persistence
• Training

• Insight into the target audience
Poll
Professional Development
Get buy-in and support from the program “ecosystem”
Empower your teams...

...with positive social media policies
The right mix of engaging info

“What’s in it for me?”
My child.
My child’s class.
My child’s teacher

What’s going on
What do I need to know?

20% Info

80%
About relevant, useful information and two way communication

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Social Media
The sites where people congregate to engage
• Blogs
• Email Newsletters
• Digital Ads
• Websites
• Facebook
• Pinterest
• Directories & Rating sites

Best digital media for attracting NEW families
Best digital media for engaging
ENROLLED FAMILIES

• Blogs
• Email Newsletters
• Websites
• Facebook
• Pinterest
• Text messaging
• Private website networks
Best digital media for engaging networks

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- Text messaging
Poll

Anout which tools do you want to learn?
What’s a blog

"Web log"

Conceived as online journals

Blogs in Plain English
## Blogs and Websites?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Websites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite interaction</td>
<td>One to many communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Reviewed and edited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weave in links to other sites, blogs</td>
<td>Intended to keep the visitor on the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused, current, and topical</td>
<td>Comprehensive: products, services,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated frequently</td>
<td>More static (except news, sales, press)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Blog?

- Increase SEO
- Attract people to your site
- Provide cravable content
- Humanize
Read B4 blogging

For Educators
• Teach Preschool http://www.teachpreschool.org/
• Pre-K Pages http://www.pre-kpages.com/blog/

For Families
NAEYC’s Families Blog: http://families.naeyc.org/blog

Policy
• Birth to Thrive Online: http://birhtothrive.thrivebyfivewa.org/
• Early Ed Watch: http://earlyed.newamerica.net/blogmain/
• Preschool Matters Today: http://preschoolmatters.org/
Business pages

Have you downloaded the new Facebook for iPhone app yet? You can now easily access the Facebook Pages you use most often from the bookmarks tab on your iPhone. Select the icon in the top left corner of the app to view your favorite Pages under the Pages section. To view and access all Pages you manage, select "See All".
The children at SIA Child Development Center (Lafayette, IN) are mastering the art of karate! What are some extra-curricular activities your child or class enjoys?

Ask Questions, Share Ideas & Win!
Register for an account and post a new discussion thread on the Bright Horizons Online Community for a chance to win a Kindle Fire HD! For details and to enter, please visit: http://bit.ly/V67BaH

HOLIDAY GIVEAWAY
From Nov 29 - Dec 14, all registered Bright Horizons Online Community members who start a new discussion thread will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a Kindle Fire HD.

Kindle Fire HD ($199 value)

www.brighthorizons.com/community
GR8 EXAMPLES OF ECE ON FACEBOOK

- Teach Preschool * 50,000 + (WOW!)
- Bright Horizons
- Child Care Resource Center, Ohio *
- NAEYC
- National Head Start Association
- Teaching Strategies
- Language Castle
- The InvestiGator Club
- Early Childhood Investigations
Like an art gallery. A visual Internet with your friends as docents.
Addictive
Twitter

“Microblogging” 14 characters or less
Most often with links to information

Staff, peers & SEO

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Engagement expert, consultant, author. Technology, marketing, social media, & webinars for early education & non-profit orgs. Founder @ecewebinars and @ecetech.
Washington, DC · http://www.esbyfs.com

12,416 TWEETS
3,917 FOLLOWING
4,607 FOLLOWERS

Tweets

Fran Simon @FSSimon
@brueckj23 Hi! Were you at an event? If so, which event?
View conversation

Fran Simon @FSSimon
Hey, @LittleLit: Do you know about #ECETechCHAT on Weds at 9 PM EDT? We'd love to have you! This week: #Art and #ECEMusic
Decoding Tweets

@Twitter ID (@ECEwebinars)
A tweet to a specific person that is visible to all

RT @Twitter ID = ReTweet (RT @ECEwebinars)
Broadcasting someone else’s tweet

D TwitterID (D ECEwebinars)
A direct message to a specific person

# = Hashtag
Hashtags define topics so they are searchable
#parents
#naeyc
#ecetech
#headstart
#ECE
#earlyed
#prek
#preschool
#childcare
#parents
#naeyc
#ecetech
#headstart
#HSprofs
Decoding links and hashtags

Fran Simon @FSSimon
Case Western study debunking the myth that tech use in #earlyed means the end of imagination [ow.ly/e2KeG] #ecetech #edtech #ece

View media
Hashtags for conferences and chats

Mme Kathleen @MmeKathleen
@jodialtringer When I blog about my tech experiences, it's always the good, the bad, and the ugly! mrsilkycactus.wordpress.com
#ecetechchat

National Black Child @NBCDI
What do you think is the single most important thing we can do to improve educational outcomes for Black children? #NBCDIconf

Nora Thompson @noralaet
@jodialtringer I'd like to know about what you are doing! You can direct message me your email so we can share.
#ecetechchat

Nora Thompson @noralaet
@jodialtringer I hope so. Still working with the district to open it up to a larger audience. Lots of permissions.
#ecetechchat

Karen Nemeth @KarenNemethEdM
@glovely would love to see 'how to' suggestions rather than reviews. I like ' use digital camera to support math by doing xyz
#ECETechChat
ReTweeting

NAEYC @NAEYC
RT @dblduchess: 13 Things Babies Learn When We Read with Them | NAEYC For Families fb.me/2qxKX4qZ1
Expand
LinkedIn

Personal, Staff, peers & SEO

It’s not just for job searching
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP NAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education, Child Care, and CCR&amp;R... (Member)</td>
<td>Early Childhood learning has always been on the radar, and many programs exist at various levels to support 0-5 children holistically and prepare...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education Network (Member)</td>
<td>Where early childhood professionals connect with each other and share vital information about all aspects of the industry. Early Childhood...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Research Professionals (Member)</td>
<td>A forum for professionals involved in the research of issues related to early childhood growth, development, health, and education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Early Childhood Consultants (Member)</td>
<td>This is a group where early childhood organizations can find outstanding consultants in the field of early childhood education. If you do not...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Technology Network (Member)</td>
<td>Early Childhood Technology Network is a community for technology-minded ECE administrators, teachers, and teachers and technology developers who...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Staff Development Professionals (Member)</td>
<td>This is a network for people who provide professional development or... for early childhood educators. We're here to share ideas, challenges...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Professionals Group (Member)</td>
<td>This is a group for early childhood professionals. Whether you call yourself a teacher, a nanny, an early interventionist, or...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs / DLLs in Early Childhood (Member)</td>
<td>For professionals who work with young children who speak different languages - a place to discuss strategies and share resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions for me?

Fran.Simon@ESbyFS.com