

Marketing Campaign

Prepared for: PSWD Early Childhood Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Introduction

Research

The Campaign

Appendix

 Research data

 School Survey Template

 Brochure

 Postcard

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Our client, Early Childhood Education, is a division within the PSWD School Ministries. The Early Childhood Cabinet exists to support, encourage and facilitate early childhood educators to effectively serve young children, their families, congregations and communities throughout developmentally appropriate Christ-centered ministries.

The Problem/Opportunity

1. The PSWD Early Childhood Education ministry does not have a unified, consistent brand message.
2. Many ECE schools in the district do not have the resources to produce effective marketing materials

Research

- Parents choose a preschool based on the school's reputation, focus on faith, location, small class sizes and safety.
- The final deciding factor on preschool choice was based on the teachers and staff and the overall atmosphere (loving, caring, nurturing-like family) were cited. The faith based, Christian focus was a secondary factor.
- Over 100% of parents find a preschool through word of mouth-particularly friends and family, the second method is digital (websites, social media, search engines and blogs).
- Parents expect their children to develop social skills, develop emotionally, prepare for the next level of education, be exposed to a faith based foundation, learn in a safe, loving and nurturing environment and the development of cognitive skills (in that order).
- Overwhelmingly, almost 70% of the parents described Lutheran preschools as being loving, caring, safe, and nurturing places. Over 30% described them as fun, amazing, excellent and other descriptive words.
- Over half of the parents wanted a Christian/biblical view, incorporating stories, songs and scripture. A solid faith foundation and reinforcement of faith by Christian teachers was mentioned.

The Campaign

Objectives:

1. Create a clear brand for Lutheran pre schools.
2. Increase awareness of Lutheran pre schools.
3. Exhibit the key benefits of attending a Lutheran pre-school through marketing materials.

The Message

To show prospective parents the characteristics of a Lutheran pre school:

- Christ-centered
- Biblical teaching
- Nurturing and loving teachers & environment
- Development of social skills
- Development of fundamental skills
- A place where children are safe and can thrive

The Tagline

Lutheran Pre-schools: Growing minds and kind hearts.

Media

- Video: a short video was created for all PSWD pre schools to use. It was developed from the information obtained in the research, consistent with the brand and theme.
- Brochure: a tri-fold brochure template was created for all schools to use.
- Postcard: a postcard template was created with the brand message on the front, with the back allowing for each school to customize.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) School Ministries is a ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod serving schools in Southern California, Arizona and Southern Nevada. The purpose of School Ministries is to be connected to Christ and connected with all schools through building and maintaining God-focused relationships. The core values of School Ministries are :

Christ-centered, Spirit filled, Ministry-minded and Servant-hearted

Our client, Early Childhood Education, is a division within the PSWD School Ministries. The Early Childhood Cabinet exists to support, encourage and facilitate early childhood educators to effectively serve young children, their families, congregations and communities throughout developmentally appropriate Christ-centered ministries.

ECE has a vision of G R A C E:

- G - grow in personal faith and knowledge
- R - respond to the needs of the early childhood community
- A - advocate for young children
- C - celebrate the uniqueness of each child of God
- E - engage in intentional ministry to young children and their families.

The Problem/Opportunity

1. The PSWD Early Childhood Education ministry does not have a unified, consistent brand message.
2. Many ECE schools in the district do not have the resources to produce effective marketing materials

RESEARCH

The Objective

In order to design an effective campaign and marketing strategy, key information was needed. These were the questions we asked:

What is important to parents when choosing a pre-school?

What expectations do parents have in a pre-school educational experience?

How do parents research and find pre-schools?

What makes Lutheran schools special?

Methodology

A market research study was designed. A seven question questionnaire was developed to discover the parents needs, concerns, decision making process and perception of preschools. Surveys were sent out to ECE parents and families in September 2015.

It was designed to be sent out by each early childhood center, to get an idea of what parents were looking for in each geographic area. Since the responses were so similar across the board, data was not separated by zip code, even though this information was collected. There were 465 responses to the survey, which is a acceptable sample size. A focus group and personal interviews were also conducted.

After all the information was collected, this data was analyzed. Most of the responses do not total 100% because respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers, or respondents skipped a question. Open responses (either by question design or the 'Other' category), have been placed into categories.

This information was then used to formulate a market strategy and an advertising campaign.

PSWD EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Survey

1. Please select which methods you used to discover our preschools. (Choose all that apply)

a. Friends/Family	g. Social Media
b. Mommy Blogs	h. Mail/Newsletter
c. Church Events	i. Website
d. Word of Mouth	j. School Events
e. Flyers/Posters	k. Other (Please specify)
f. Banners/Signage	

2. What were the most important factors that you used when choose your child's pre-school? (Please select your top 5)

a. Safety	g. Hours of Operation
b. Faith based	h. Foundational Academics
c. Location	i. Price
d. School Reputation	j. Parent Participation
e. Teacher Credentials	k. Facility
f. Teacher to Student Ratio	l. Developmental Programs

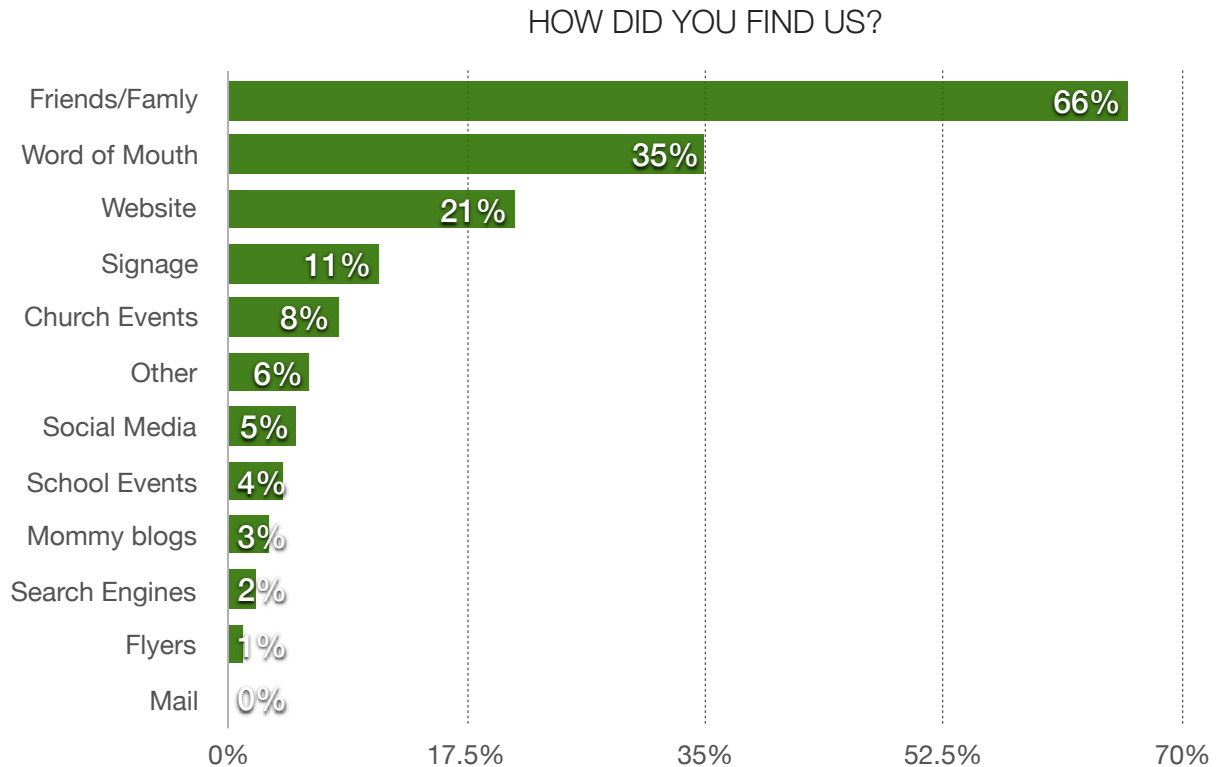
3. What was the final deciding factor when choosing your preschool?
4. Briefly describe the expectations you have for your child during his/her preschool experience.
5. In one or two words, how you would describe your pre-school?
6. What would you like to see in a church related pre-school?
7. Please enter your home zip code.

PSWD EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Data

Question 1. Please select which methods you used to discover our preschool. (Choose all that apply).

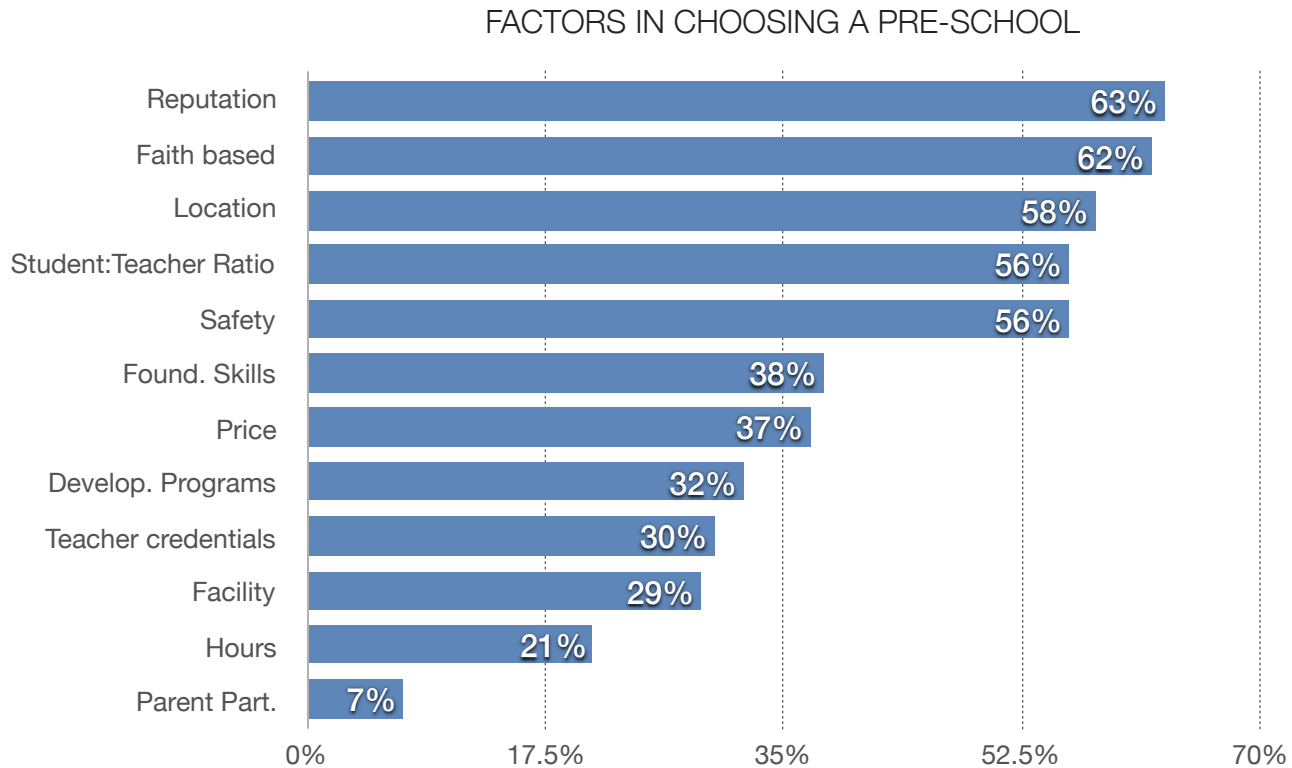
This question is designed to assist with promotion and media choices. There were 463 responses.



By far, personal contact is the major way parents find out about a preschool. With over 100% (friends/family at 66% and general word of mouth at 35%) this indicates that a referral or personal relationship is key. Digital media is at 31% (website-21%, social media-5%, search engines-2% (which includes Google and Yelp), and mommy blogs-3%). Church and school events come in at 12%, with signage at 11% (this also includes location, drive-bys, etc). Print media (flyers or direct mail) is at less than 1%.

PSWD EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Q2. What were the most important factors that you used when choosing your child's preschool? (Select your top 5 answers). There were 456 responses.



School reputation and a faith based education was at the top of parent's factors in choosing their pre-school, at 63% and 62%. Over half of the parents cited location, student:teacher ratio and safety factors (58 and 56%) as important.

A third of the parents chose foundational academic skills (38%), price (37%), developmental programs (32%), teacher credentials (30%) and facilities (29%) as being important.

Hours and parent participation were selected last (21% and 7% respectively).

PSWD EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Q3. What was the final deciding factor when choosing your pre-school?

This was an open-ended question, which 440 respondents (95%) answered. Many respondents gave multiple answers. The responses have been grouped into the following:

Response	% of Respondents
Teachers, staff, credentials	32%
Atmosphere (loving, nurturing, caring, family)	28%
Faith based, Christian, Lutheran	19%
Program (curriculum, play, developmental, academics)	13%
Price	9%
Location (close to home, convenient)	8%
Reputation, referral	7%
Availability (hours, schedule)	6%
Student:Teacher ratio (small class sizes)	3%
Facility	3%
Safety	3%

Some of the actual representative quotes:

“Wanted a play based school, where you could feel the love for the kids and their well being. Where we felt comfortable when we walked in. Faith based was a big plus!”

“TV is not used in the classroom; teachers that are actively involved in my child's social and educational activities at school; open communication between teachers and parents.”

“How we “felt” when touring it. Had an emotional connection during that experience and every other school we visited could not compare.”

“Best faith based school at the right price that feels like family that can challenge my child to grow and learn.”

PSWD EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Q4. Briefly describe the expectations you have for your child during his/her preschool experience.

This was an open-ended question, which 428 respondents (92%) answered. Many respondents gave multiple answers

Response	% of Respondents
Development of social skills (plays well with others)	39%
Preparation for next level of education	29%
Faith based foundation	26%
Safe, loving, nurturing environment	24%
Development of cognitive skills (academics)	23%
Happy child (have fun learning)	19%
Hands on play	11%
Develop a love for learning and going to school	6%

"I hope my daughter will be nurtured and loved as she would at home and learn important social and academic skills as well as Christian values."

"We want our son to grow spiritually, scholastically and socially. We want him to be ready for Kindergarten in all of those aspects!"

"I expect him to gain social skills, to learn to enjoy going to school, and to develop his love for Jesus. I also expect some academic growth, but I see the other factors as more important."

"I expect for the school to provide genuine care for my child when she is there. To help me build her confidence, individuality, faith & joy during this season in her life."

"We want him to be academically prepared for kindergarten and beyond, and well as have a good base in God and faith. We value the social interactions and teachings as well as the sense of community."

"I expect my child will receive an introduction to an academic setting and socialization with children his age. The school will use a combination of formal teaching and play-based learning to grow my child academically, physically, and spiritually. Instruction will be faith-based and will encourage curiosity and understanding of God's Word. Children will have the opportunity to interact in group and individualized activities when leaning and practicing new concepts/skills. Any issues that arise with my child will be communicated by staff, so parents can be highly involved in the child's education."

PSWD EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Q5. In one or two words, how would you describe your pre-school?

This question is designed to help with positioning of the Lutheran pre-school. These were the most popular words, ranked by response. There were 418 responses (90%).

Emotional (69%)	Descriptive (32%)	Structure (4%)	Faith (3%)
Loving (86)	Fun (29)	Organized (9)	Christ (12)
Caring (38)	Great (22)	Structured (8)	-centered
Safe (30)	Amazing (18)		-like
Nurturing (28)	Wonderful (15)		-Christian
Friendly (20)	Excellent (13)		
Warm (16)	Awesome (13)		
Welcoming (14)	Happy (11)		
Family (11)	Fantastic (8)		
Inviting (11)	Incredible (3)		
Positive (11)			
Kind (8)			
Engaging (6)			
Home (5)			
Comfort (4)			

Other words mentioned: gentle, sweet, top-notch, the Best, attentive, dynamic, well-rounded, refreshing, compassionate, joyful, authentic, natural, harmonious, beautiful, a blessing, gracious.

PSWD EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Q6. What would you like to see in a church related pre-school?

This question was asked to discern the expectations of parents with regard to faith. There were 354 responses (76% of the total responded).

Response	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Incorporating Christian stories, messages, songs, scripture, prayer	75	21%
Reinforcement of faith, faith development	70	20%
Christian teaching, teachers, foundations	67	19%
Bible based teaching, lessons, readings	54	15%
Learn about Jesus	33	9%
Christian values/morals	33	9%
Chapel	18	5%
Balance between developmental programs and religion	9	3%
More interaction between church and school	7	2%

Roughly 75% or 266 respondents (57% of the total respondents), wanted to see the incorporation of Christian/biblical messages, stories, songs in the classroom. In addition, Christian teachers and faith foundation and reinforcement were cited.

Q7. Please enter your home zip code.

There were 203 responses from Arizona, 149 responses from California and 64 responses from Nevada.

Conclusions

- Overwhelmingly parents find out about your school, through word of mouth-particularly friends and family.
- The second method is completely digital (websites, social media, search engines and blogs)
- The major factors in choosing a preschool was the school's reputation, focus on faith, location, small class sizes and safety.
- The final deciding factor-why did they choose your preschool—was based on the teachers and staff and credentials were cited. The secondary factors were the loving, caring atmosphere (like family) and the faith based, Christian focus.
- The top expectations that parents had for their children when attending preschool was the development of social skills, preparation for the next level of education, a faith based foundation, a safe, loving and nurturing environment and the development of cognitive skills (in that order).
- Overwhelmingly, almost 70% of the parents described Lutheran preschools as being loving, caring, safe, and nurturing places. Over 30% described them as fun, amazing, excellent and other descriptive words.
- Over half of the parents wanted a Christian/biblical view, incorporating stories, songs and scripture. A solid faith foundation and reinforcement of faith by Christian teachers was mentioned.

THE CAMPAIGN

Objectives

1. Increase awareness of Lutheran pre-schools.
2. Exhibit the key benefits of attending a Lutheran pre-school through marketing materials.
3. Create a clear brand of the Lutheran pre-schools.

The Message

To show prospective parents the characteristics of a Lutheran pre-school:

- Christ-centered
- Biblical teaching
- Nurturing and loving teachers & environment
- Development of social skills
- Development of fundamental skills
- A place where children are safe and can thrive

Even though there are many rational reasons that parents use to choose a preschool, the ultimate decision is an emotional one. The message must “hit their hearts.”

The Tagline

Lutheran Pre-schools: Growing minds and kind hearts.

There were many iterations of this tagline discussed, the main thought was that children were learning fundamental skills-cognitively, spiritually, emotionally and socially within a Lutheran Christian context. Bottom line: Parents want happy children that are prepared for the next level, so the idea that learning would continue to grow and that children would have a kind, safe environment in which to thrive must be indicated.

Media

Video

“A Day in the Life”

Using the survey results and feedback from pre-school directors and parents, a short video was created for all pre-schools to use. The main concept was to show a nurturing environment, children being very social, learning fundamental skills and most important: how Jesus loves them. “A Day in the Life” shows parents what their child might do in their daily routine at a Lutheran preschool. The script was carefully crafted to incorporate our message and local Lutheran pre-schools and students were used in the making of the video.

From the drop off in the morning to ending the school day, the video aimed to encompass all major concepts, appeal to the emotions and give prospective parents a real glimpse of what happens at school.

In order to best exemplify the day of a child, the video features students learning about Jesus and the days of the week, having story time, creating memories with new friends, playing outdoors, picking up after themselves, praying and much more.

Print

Brochure

A tri-fold brochure template was created for schools. This reiterates the message and incorporates all of the information from the research. The major points are:

- Christ-centered
- Preparation for Kindergarten
- Foundational skills
- Social development
- Personalized attention
- Reinforcement of faith

Postcard

A postcard was created in line with the campaign and the tagline. This has a design on one side only, with the major points. The reverse is entirely customizable by the schools. We envision this would be included with all admissions packets, or used as a leave behind.

APPENDIX