



# Attracting New Families

by David Boyd, National Coordinator, Children's Ministries Agency / BGMC

Parents are concerned about the well-being of their children. According to realtors, many families determine where the best schools are located prior to their moving into a new community. They then purchase a home in those school districts. Parents will often give up a house they want so they can live in a particular school district. In the same way, parents are seeking a church that will benefit their children. They will search until they find a church with quality children's programs, even if it means giving up something else they prefer. A well-planned, quality children's ministry will attract new families.

## Keeping New Families

First impressions are important. Families looking for a new church home usually visit a church only once. Your church gets one Sunday to make a favorable impression.

When parents visit your church and the children's area, they notice whether the workers are loving and caring. They look to see if the hallways, bathrooms, and classrooms are clean, neat, and child friendly or if they are cluttered, antiquated, and in disrepair.

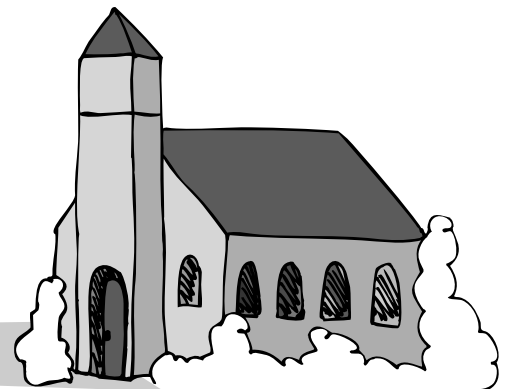
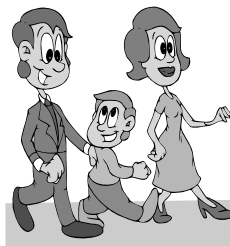
Parents with newborns visit the church nursery. When they

take their baby to a church nursery, they're expecting it to be clean and modern. A nursery full of old hand-me-downs does not impress them.

Children love personal attention, so each week "thanks for visiting" letters are sent to visiting children and parents. Teachers are trained to follow up on their visitors as well as children who are absent.

paid staff, such as an early childhood pastor, or an assistant children's pastor. The more staff, the more care that ministry will receive.

Second, staff your ministries with volunteers. The senior pastor must emphasize that the church will only be as successful as each person in the church is doing God's work each week. If each person in the congregation



## Developing a Quality Children's Ministry in Your Church

First, invest in leadership. If your church is large enough, hire a children's pastor to oversee your children's ministry. Choose the best person you can. Train him/her. As your children's program grows, add other

does one ministry job, every children's ministry vacancy will be filled, and every other ministry in the church will have adequate staff. No matter how excellent your paid staff members are, a church stagnates if the laity doesn't get involved reaching, teaching, and caring for others.

Third, support your children's ministry financially. Regularly evaluate your facilities. Do they

appeal to new parents and children? Are your facilities inviting to children who attend? Is there adequate money to supply the many needs in the children's areas?

There are many ministries within the church that help the church to grow. If your target is young families, remember that they are concerned about the children's department. When

churches make a whole-hearted effort to care for children and reach them with the gospel, they become churches that attract young families.

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### Questions For Further Study—

1. How child- and family-friendly are the facilities at your church?
2. What programs are in place in your church to follow up on visiting families?
3. What are some things you can do to improve the effectiveness of your children's ministry team?