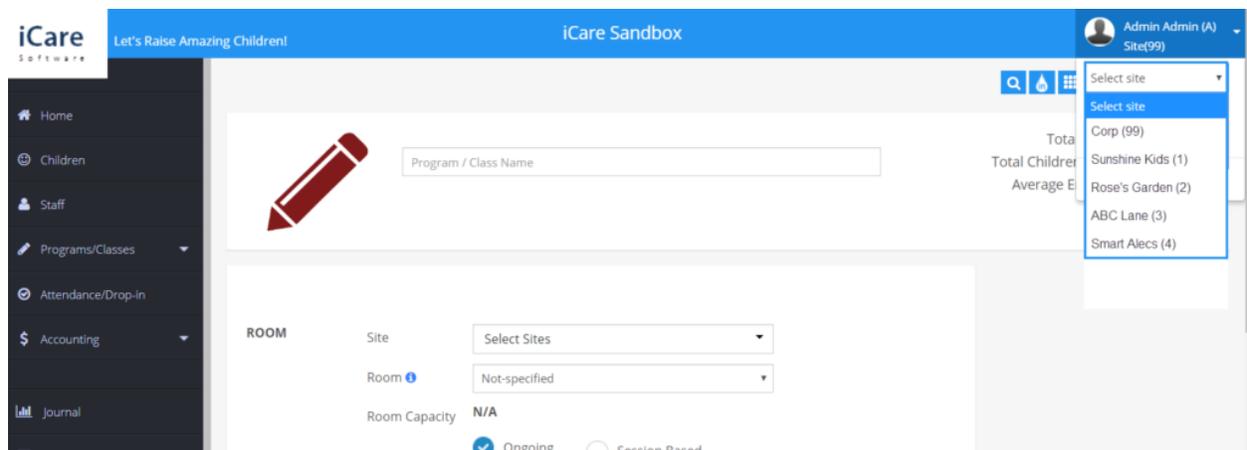


How to get the most out of child care management software

A guide for child care centers of all types and sizes



Once you've taken the leap of adding childcare management software to your center, you need to ensure you get the most return on your investment. Here are 10 ways to maximize your childcare management software to sustain and grow your center.

1. Set up automated payments

One of the most time-consuming aspects of running a childcare center without technology is invoicing, collecting payments and following up on late payments. When you implement childcare management software, make your first step reaching out to your customers to set up direct deposit.

Once your automatic payments are set up with your customers, you'll have more time to focus on other aspects of your center. Childcare management software enables you to automatically use attendance information to bill clients. You'll never need to send another invoice or send payment reminders.

Plus, when you choose iCare Software, we'll send you notifications

when credit cards are about to expire so you can contact customers to update their card before they even miss a payment.

2. Schedule staff using attendance data

The right staffing makes a huge difference in your childcare center's bottom line. You need to have enough staff to cover your student-teacher



ratio in each classroom, but overstaffing means you're spending money you don't have to.

Start planning out your staffing using attendance data in your childcare management software. As children graduate from one classroom to another, your needs will fluctuate. Generally speaking, student-to-teacher ratios increase as children age so the balance of your students' ages will affect how many teachers you schedule each day.

Knowing when children will be out for vacations, extended leaves of absence and other changes in attendance can help inform your staffing decisions. Integrate your staffing and attendance data together to make more informed scheduling decisions and reap the benefits to your bottom line.

Plus, if you offer part-time or flexible attendance options, your teacher scheduling is more complicated. Reports through your childcare management software will inform your decision-making around staffing and help you offer more attendance options to maximize your customer base by never turning away a customer based on special attendance needs.

3. Take all training offered and minimize print costs

From in-person training to webinars and pre-recorded instruction, be sure that you take part in all training opportunities your childcare software offers. Onboarding properly can mean that you start getting all the benefits of the software from the start.

If you didn't onboard well in the beginning, it's not too late. You can still learn from the training sessions and improve your software usage according to their guidelines.

Should you encounter anything within the training that you don't understand or that you need more explanation on, you should reach out to support for your software. Have them describe in detail what the various functionalities do and how to use them in your specific childcare set up.

Now that you've invested in childcare management software, you need to look for ways to reduce your costs elsewhere to make the investment worth it. Printing and paper records cost more than you would think. By reducing your printer costs, you can maximize the ROI of your childcare management software.

- Stop printing child summaries
- Go digital on invoicing and receipts
- Maximize communication tools for notifications
- Take payments online

4. Increase enrollment with reporting



Reports can show you areas of opportunity within your childcare center. Moms and dads expecting a new little one and trying to plan ahead for their childcare needs will often approach your center early to ask about openings.

If you're not maximizing your childcare center's reporting functionality, it could take hours of

calculating when children will move up from one classroom to the next and where your openings will be.

Childcare management software makes it easy to see availability at any given time. Run a report and check for the space so that you can plan ahead to never have an empty spot in your childcare. The more empty places you have, the more income you're missing out on.

5. Expand your services and options

Part-time care, drop-in care, flex scheduling – those are terms that make some childcare administrators quiver in fear. But you don't have to once you adopt childcare management software.

The accounting and attendance tracking paper nightmares disappear with childcare management software, opening the door for you to expand your services using the software.

The reality is, your teachers will get paid whether they're watching one child or the maximum for their room's student-to-teacher ratio. The more you can max out your capacity, the more you can help your bottom line.

Depending on the businesses and working professionals in your area, you can also test out being open during different hours of the day or trying a weekend offering. Childcare management software can then help you decide the profitability of these arrangements with financial reports combined with attendance records, all in one place.

6. Start sharing more with parents and communicate more

Raising children can be a collaboration between parents and caregivers. To make parents feel involved with care during the time their child spends at your facility, you need to communicate often and regularly.

Train your teachers to share the everyday special moments that happen with each student. From pictures to messages about activities the child completes each day, you can create strong bonds between the parents and teachers at your childcare center using digital communication.

While the day-to-day activities will warm parents' hearts and make them appreciate the care you provide, quarterly or annual learning summaries will give parents the peace of mind that you're also partnering with them in their child's development.

At a child's initial enrollment, document where they are at so you can show improvements and growth later on. Then, take the time at regular intervals to share updates with parents.

Initially, when the child is young, these growth milestones might start with color and shape recognition. As the child ages, you can show math and reading skills. For school-aged children, highlight the tutoring and homework help you provide before and after school.



The more parents know about the value you provide, the better they'll feel about their decision to send their child to your childcare center and the longer they're likely to stay with your business.

Additionally, you need to teach parents about how to use the

childcare software to its fullest. Reducing turnover with the parents who patronize your childcare center means reduction in marketing and customer acquisition costs, which improves your bottom line. Plus, the less turnover you have, the less likely you are to have empty spots in your childcare center that leave gaps in your revenue.

When you welcome a new family to your childcare center, take the time to show them how to view summaries within iCare Software. Seeing what their child did that day can have a huge impact on a parent and how they view the care you provide. Set up push notifications for both parents and other approved caregivers so that they see each photo and journal note you post.

Parents who have been patrons of your childcare center for a great deal of time should get a regular review with administration. Invite them into the office for five minutes to discuss how things are going. Make sure they're pleased with their teachers and ask if there's anything you can do to communicate better and more clearly with them.

The more open you make your lines of communication with parents, the sooner you'll hear of any problems or complaints so that you can address them before they become a serious issue.

7. Get your teachers involved

If you haven't taken time to evaluate your salaries and teacher costs, you might not realize how much caregiver turnover costs you. Constantly hiring and introducing parents to new teachers takes a toll on your childcare center.

Keeping teachers engaged and feeling rewarded is an important aspect of a successful childcare business. Childcare management software can help your teachers feel good about the job that they do

and give them more time to focus on students and less time on paperwork.

Include childcare management software training as part of your teacher onboarding. At teacher in-service days, take time to cover new software features and discuss any pain points with teachers. Teachers should feel like part owners in the childcare management software you have, and to do so, they need to be involved.

At annual reviews, discuss openly with your teachers whether or not they're seeking new opportunities. Ask what they need to stay and how you can better assist them with managing their classroom. The more open and honest your dialogue is with your teachers, the more involved and invested they will feel in your childcare center.

If you can, have a strong open-door policy for teachers to come and talk to administration at any time. That way, you don't have to wait until annual review time and can discover teacher concerns before they grow into larger issues.

8. Use the digital calendar to its fullest

Your childcare center puts time and effort into planning fun events, such as pajama days, holiday parties and student graduations. Keeping parents, teachers and administrators on the same page about when events are happening can be challenging, especially if you own and operate a large childcare center.

A digital calendar within your childcare management software can help you communicate and keep up with activities. Wraparound care can also be simplified by listing school closings and observed holidays for both public and private schools in your area on the calendar. Then you can see when you'll have school-aged children at your center all day instead of just before and after school.

Teachers will feel informed, parents will be more organized, and administrators can spend less time sending out communications and making sure everyone is on the same page leading up to an event.

9. Secure your data

Sadly, securing data in today's world is difficult. Hackers look to leverage your data for ransom or identity theft leaving you open to huge liability if it ever gets into the wrong hands. Paper records are subject to break-ins and accidents in proper handling.

Moving your data to the cloud enables you to secure your data through layers of logins and administrator rights. Allow teachers to see what they need to see to do their jobs and provide administrators with the data and record-keeping they need to be compliant with regulations.

Safeguarding vaccination records, medical information and other private health information is a top priority because the consequences of not securing your information are too severe and could put you out of business.



Childcare management software makes it possible for you to securely house and manage data. Plus, parents can self-register in the web-based platform and seamlessly provide their own updates as needed.

10. Maintain your license

Each state's licensing requirements are different. Some states make it easy to file the necessary paperwork to maintain your license to operate a childcare center, while others mean pulling together reports on a regular basis to prove you're in line with regulations.

No matter how involved or simple your reporting is to maintain your license, childcare management software can simplify it. Prove your student-to-teacher ratio is appropriate with attendance reports, show proper paperwork and health records, and document compliance all within the web-based application you use every day.

That way it's not a scramble for information when the time comes for reporting to the state. Click a button, file and report the necessary paperwork so that it is no longer an activity that you dread.

About iCare Software

iCare Software started out as an on-premise solution for childcare centers. When we moved the software to the cloud, we became one of the most feature-rich products on the market because of our history of servicing childcare centers with the best tools to run their business. We now offer a secure application you can reach through your web browser from any device, anywhere.

With functionality and tools designed for childcare centers of all kinds – childcare/daycare center, preschool, Montessori, after-school care, drop-in center, enrichment program and camps – we help tailor the software to meet your individual needs.

We know how to service childcare centers because we've been doing it for more than 20 years. The iCare Software team can turn your complex administration tasks into simple clicks of a button. Want to learn how? Contact us at sales@icaresoftware.com or visit our website icaresoftware.com to learn more.