

# ***Ultimate Guide to Optimizing and Automating Your Child Care Management System***



# Introduction

In 2022, the need for childcare has risen greatly. **78% of mothers** and 83% of fathers in the U.S. rely on outside help for childcare.

This influx of children into an already saturated system can overload existing childcare centers. It's especially true when it comes to administrative tasks in childcare management. Keeping track of vital records, attendance, and payments are crucial to maintaining a smooth-running facility. On top of those challenges, there's the challenge of not overloading the good teachers that are becoming increasingly tough to find and retain.

The right Child Care Management System can help you with the day-to-day workings of your childcare center. But if you aren't sure how to make the most out of your childcare management software, this guide can help.

**To learn more about how to streamline and optimize your Child Care Management System, keep reading.**

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# **Benefits of a Child Care Management System**

**Using a powerful Child Care Management System offers your childcare program many benefits. Among the benefits of optimizing and streamlining the ins and outs of daily workings are:**

- Saving Time
- Improved Efficiency
- Simpler Teacher and Parent Engagement
- Happier Parents
- Easier Reporting
- More Hands-on Time with the Children
- Enhanced Security
- Increased Revenue and Better Billing
- Improved Child and Family Management
- An enhanced classroom environment

You can improve all these elements of your Child Care Management System. As you do, it will help create the most efficient childcare center as outlined below.

# Lead Management/CRM



An improved Child Care Management System helps with your existing childcare center customers. It can also allow you to optimize lead management by enhancing your [\*\*Customer Relationship Management \(CRM\) process\*\*](#). Leads are a crucial part of every childcare center.

## **What Is Lead Management?**

Lead management is an essential part of creating a real connection with every potential customer who interacts with your center. This could include phone, email, or in-person contact. Each connection is called a lead, consistent follow through on leads is vital to increase your enrollment.

## **Benefits of Lead Management**

[\*\*Customer Relationship Management \(CRM\)\*\*](#) software handles the hard work of capturing the contact information of each potential lead. The system keeps these contacts in the database to use for increasing engagement. The CRM can also enable you to:

- Conduct follow-up calls/emails
- Send out promotional special event emails
- Inform parents of drop-in care availability
- Build trust with the parents until enrollment
- Communicate about available vacancies
- Test interest in new programs

Even if parents are still deciding or aren't ready to commit to your childcare program at the current time, this can benefit you in the long run. Since odds are that they, or someone they know, will be seeking out a quality childcare program in the future.

A CRM will help you stay on top of the reminders and the engagement with a potential customer so that when the time comes to choose the right childcare program, yours will be on their radar. If they have a friend or family member who needs childcare, they can refer them to your center as well.

# **Simplifying The Communication Experience**



**A lot goes into keeping parents and other family members in the loop when managing a childcare center.**

Childcare teams are already busy tending to the needs of the children in their care while also working to cultivate engagement and communication with the families of their students. They may not know how, or have the tools, to communicate with parents effectively.

## **Why Is This Important?**

Working parents and guardians need updates on the goings on at the childcare location. Parents might not always be available to answer phone calls if they are in an important meeting or tending to some other life issues. Newsletters and fliers can get lost or go unread.

## **How Can a Child Care Management System Help Facilitate Communication?**

The [Smartcare Child Care Management System](#) can be tailored to send out alerts and notifications to parents and other family members responsible for a child's care like the grandparents. If there are any center or school closures due to weather or other issues, all relevant family members will receive notice accordingly.

Email and SMS messages can be created as needed or by using premade filters and templates. These can serve as emergency notifications or for general engagement and referral purposes. This makes the communication process simpler for the childcare center staff so they can focus on the children while also improving the communication experience between the child's family and the childcare center.

With premium classroom management features, real-time 2-way chat can be enabled to allow an extra level of connection and communication between parents and teachers. This level of engagement can set your program apart from others.

# Setting Up Your Child Care Center



**With a Child Care Management System, you can manage regulatory tracking automatically.** For children, the parents, or other guardians of the child, signing the child in or out of the center is easy with a scannable custom QR code in the Parent App or on a printed key tag. A PIN system can also function as an identifier to clock the child in and out at a kiosk.

An integrated door lock system provides added security for your team and the families that depend on your program. It allows only designated parents and guardians to unlock the door through the proper QR code or PIN code identification.

## **Benefits of a Childcare Attendance Management System**

The benefits of a dedicated Childcare Attendance Management System are numerous. It provides the ultimate security for the center. It also gives parents peace of mind, knowing that their child cannot be taken out of the center without the proper credentials.

Moreover, this feature reduces the center's liability for discharging a child accidentally to a non-approved parent or guardian.



# Assistance with Setting Up Your Child Care Center

**Your Child Care Management System can also help you with the many facets of setting up and running your childcare center. It can offer lesson plans to assist you with your daily classes, including assessments.**

For new enrollees into the childcare center, you can access all the necessary forms and send them out to the parents via email to fill out ahead of time. This [modernizes your childcare facility](#).

Once you receive these forms, the documents containing all the pertinent information is securely stored within the system, and away from prying eyes. However, it's still easily accessible for referencing by the childcare center staff.

The right Child Care Management System enables smarter billing and payment processing services through automation, including automated tuition tracking, automated invoicing, easy split billing, and automated payment processing. It can also automatically withdraw the specified amount based on attendance records at the beginning or end of each month.

## Benefits of Childcare Center Setup

Having a Child Care Management System set up streamlines the essential functions of managing a childcare center which can save you valuable time. You can even use it to set up and [manage multiple locations](#) all at once.

An automated system also helps to reduce paperwork since it is all digitalized within the system. It keeps files more organized and prevents paperwork from getting lost or misfiled.

Automating invoices and processing and keeping track of payments can significantly reduce late payments from parents so you receive the money you need when you need it to keep up with expenses.

# Effective Time Management



With the old way of running and managing a childcare program, so much time is wasted focusing on every little minute detail of managing the business. It's a full-time job keeping up with just the business and administration aspects of the childcare center without considering time spent caring for the children.

A Child Care Management System allows you to work with your employees through the streamlined program to manage information and care. As a result, **more time is spent focusing exclusively on the children.**

Meanwhile, the autopayment feature accelerates and increases the cash flow to the center and resulting in a more solid financial footing for your business.

## Save Time By Prioritizing And Automating High-Value Tasks

- Billing/Invoicing
- Online Enrollment
- Immunization Tracking
- Keeping Families Up To Date
- Managing Employees
- Automate Custom Reporting

# Providing a Teacher's Perspective



**A Child Care Management System with a classroom management focus is integral to a preschool, daycare or other childcare program because it organizes and tracks the main points of focus throughout the day. Just like a teacher in their classroom. It considers areas such as:**

- Classroom management and child experience
- Parent and teacher engagement
- Meal tracking
- Customized assessments
- Effective parental communication

The [\*\*Preschool2Me program\*\*](#) is classroom-focused child care management software that incorporates a 2-way chat feature between the childcare center and the parents in real-time. You can also track meals, naps, illnesses, and other incidents.

Preschool2Me's advanced program also allows for the childcare center to map out lesson plans with assessments to track a child's progress. Attendance management and absence reporting keep children safe and accounted for at all times.

The Child Care Management System also handles compliance tracking to show that the childcare center meets all the necessary state requirements.

# Financial Tracking and Reporting



In 2020 alone, **57% of working parents** spent over \$10,000 on child care. For a married couple, this is roughly 10% of their total income.

But for a single parent, this cost as a percentage of their income rises considerably. With **more than 35%** of a single parent's median income going towards child care costs, this far exceeds the 7% recommended amount spent on child care by the Department of Health and Human Services. With parents' eyes directly focused on their costs, keeping accurate financial records and reports is imperative. The Child Care Management System helps with the financial tracking and reports for the childcare center.

The Smartcare Child Care Management System helps you customize the reporting you need to determine the proper payment and billing structure and set the most appropriate rates. On top of that, it gives you the control to determine the frequency of when parents receive statements.

The Build Back Better Act could save low-income families between **\$5,000-\$6,500 in childcare costs**. For children receiving subsidized care, you can manage a parent's co-pay with the subsidy payer together. Compliance reporting shows that your center meets all the financial criteria for state subsidy requirements.

The Smartcare system automatically generates consolidated reports to save you time and cut down disorganized files. It provides accurate account summaries so you can organize and regain control of effective billing and payment cycles.

The "set it and forget it" command tells the system to automatically debit auto-payments, add charges, and send statements.

# Functionality and Parent Communication

The built-in messaging feature displays the childcare center's engagement with their children throughout the day. It shows when they are napping, having a snack, or transitioning into and out of certain classes.

Parents are also kept up to date with any events, emergencies, and other notifications too through the Parent App. Of course, the easy billing and payment feature is again a big plus for both the childcare center and the parents. The ability to easily pay their bill through the [parent app](#) simplifies the parents' lives and makes it easier for the childcare program to get paid on time. On top of that, easy-to-use split billing allows costs to be shared for modern, split families.

**A Child Care Management System like Smartcare offers family management so you know exactly who is allowed to drop off and pick up the child and who is not allowed.**

# Preschool and Before/After-School Program Classroom Management



Preschool and after-school programs rely heavily on structure. You can't have children just running amok unfocused all day. They need the proper stimulation and learning activities.

This depends on the age groups as well as the type of classroom management and activities you want to implement. For preschoolers, you need to focus on fine motor skills and tactile learning. Like a [sensory table](#) or anything that focuses on colors, basic shapes, letters, and numbers.

For slightly older children in after-school care, you must implement further enrichment tailored to their age groups such as art, music, building, math, and counting.

## Benefits of Classroom Management for Preschool and Before/After-School Programs

Childcare centers can be hectic, especially with dozens of little ones running around in need of attention and stimulation.

With lesson plans and [classroom management tools](#) specific to the age group and classroom setup, you won't have to worry so much about the details. You can turn your attention toward your young students instead.

## Lesson Planning Ideas

Some lesson planning ideas for after-school care among children may include making instruments from reused items, like a mini drum made from a can. Painting, coloring, drawing, as well as building from LEGOs and other building sets, are great uses of time.

Preschool children can partake in activities like sorting colored blocks or placing toys into specific number groups. They can also sort letters and numbers into different cups.

# Employee Management



**To run an efficient childcare center, you also must manage your employees to make sure they do their jobs well. After all, trained and effective employees are the glue helping hold your childcare program together.**

You want to make sure you cover all aspects of employee management including clocking in and out, payroll, hiring, and employee training as you select the tools to deploy for your business. The Child Care Management System tracks your employees' clock-in and clock-out times and keeps you properly equipped to handle payroll cycles.

Data about new hires should be properly tracked, including records like their cleared background checks and physical results to ensure they are fit to work in your program.

## **Benefits of Employee Management**

Using the same Child Care Management System as you do for the other facets of running the childcare center for employee management will allow you to have everything together in one central hub.

You can rest assured knowing that the children are in safe and competent hands and your employees are taken care of as well.

# An All-In-One Solution For Child Care Management

**Let's face it, trying to combine tools and systems without effective integrations to manage your childcare program can be overwhelming and expensive.**

Not only can this cost significantly more than an all-in-one solution it can increase your admin time and may even increase your staffing cost to manage it all.

That's why the team at Vanco Care recommends using Smartcare as an all-inclusive childcare management system to streamline and optimize your childcare program. It can help you increase parent engagement, boost enrollments, and save you time and money on managing your childcare program. [Click here](#) to schedule a consultation with our team and let us help you build a customized and flexible childcare management system to fit your unique childcare program.



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