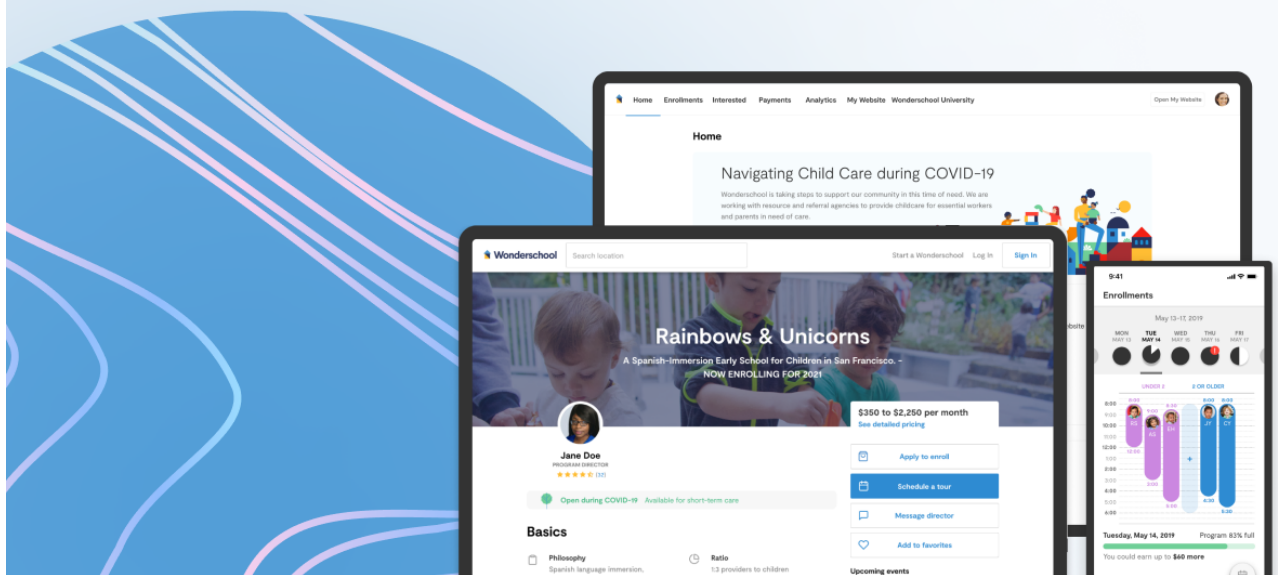




# WELCOMING FAMILIES TO YOUR PROGRAM

How to plan and run successful events.



# Events Guide

Events are a great way to introduce your program to the community and to bring in prospective families. Especially if you live in a suburban or rural community, events are a critical tool in marketing your business and helping you build your waitlist or get enrollments.

Whether this is your first or 100th event, this guide is meant to provide you with a framework and resources to think through setting up and running a successful event for your program!

## What’s In This Guide

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## Defining a Goal

Before you host an event, it’s good to start with defining a goal! Why are you feeling compelled to host an event at your space? It’s best to ask yourself these questions ahead of time to help you plan out your event.

<p>1. What do I want to get out of this event? _____ <i>i.e. Are you looking to build your waitlist? Build brand recognition in your neighborhood?</i></p> <p>2. Is there a specific age group or neighborhood I want to break into? <i>i.e. Do you have preschool spots that you’re looking to fill? Do you want more families from an adjacent neighborhood to expand to more potential families?</i></p> _____
<p>3. Where are there natural groups of parents in your area? <i>Is there a local library or coffee shop you could post fliers in? How about the local school or pediatrician’s office?</i></p> _____

## Community Building

When you’re defining a goal for your event, we encourage you to consider framing it through the lens of “how do I become a key member of my community?”. This will

help naturally build your brand and your business and help set you up for long term success.

## Budget and Schedule

If this is your first event (or the first one you've hosted in a while) it's best to consider your first event as practice – it's not uncommon for it to have little or no attendees. With that in mind, we suggest developing a budget for your first few events and trying to keep it as low cost as possible.

### Budget

Given that you're likely to have few attendees at your first event, we recommend setting a budget or activity that you can re-use at future events if the first one has a poor turn out. When setting a budget, we recommend you figure out how much you want to spend overall, and then back into an estimate for \$/child. Not sure how to start? Use our budget calculator [here](#). We strongly encourage utilizing materials you already have on hand, or have individually wrapped and shelf stable snacks that can be reused for future events if you have extra.

### Scheduling Events

It's best to vary the timing of your first few events to try and reach a broader group of parents. Not everyone has the same schedule so we recommend offering a few different options such as:

- Weekday evenings
- Weekday late afternoons
- Weekends in the morning or mid-day.

Whatever time you choose is likely going to be outside your regular business hours, since you're targeting families who work when you're open.

### Timing

While we encourage you to host events throughout the year, there are some times that are best for events as well as dates to avoid.

#### *Best for Events*

July - September as well as January tend to be peak season for enrollments and when families are searching for childcare. These are the best times to run frequent events if possible.

#### *Dates to Avoid*

In general it is best to avoid having events around: Thanksgiving, December 20 - January 2, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Veterans Day.

# Playing to Your Strengths

Many providers think they need to go all out to impress families in their neighborhood for events. And while hiring a children’s musician or a petting zoo will definitely attract families, these events can get expensive and are difficult to do more than once.



Family reading circle at Mi Cunita de Noe Valley.

For your events, we encourage you to **play to your strengths** and host an event that you feel comfortable with and may have the materials and resources already available to you. Think about what would bring a group together and what are some marketable things about your program that you could turn into a potential event.

<p>1. What are you excited to share about your program? <i>Are you excited to highlight your outdoor space? Are you particularly crafty and want to highlight craft activities available to children in your program? Is your program bilingual and could you host a bilingual story hour?</i></p> <hr/>
<p>2. What is a highlight of your program that makes it stand out? <i>Consider what is a key differentiator for your program and try to incorporate that into an event idea.</i></p> <hr/>
<p>3. If you met a stranger who asked about your program, what would you tell them? <i>Consider how you would describe your program and use that as a starting point of what some of your strengths are! Use those strengths as an opportunity to come up with activities or ideas for events.</i></p> <hr/>

# Pre-Event Set Up

When it comes time to schedule your event, you want to ensure you are getting the word out there to potential families. We recommend doing this in two key ways:

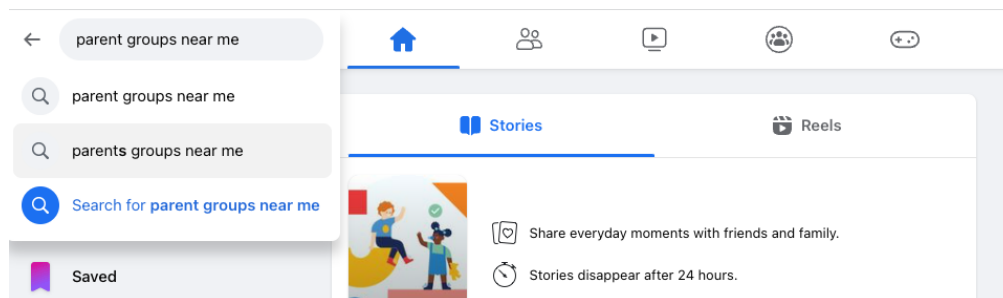
## 1. Listing Your Event on You Wonderschool Site

The first step we recommend is to create your event on your Wonderschool page, where families can RSVP and look at your program’s website. This also enables your event to show up in local search results if a family Google’s “events in my area”.

- a. [How to create an event on your Wonderschool website!](#)

## 2. Promoting Your Event in Facebook Groups

Another way to promote your event is posting it in local pages on Facebook. This will help families a part of those groups see your event as well as learn about your program. We recommend searching for local Parent, New Mom, or Preschool groups in your area. You can do this by entering “parent groups near me” in the Facebook search bar.



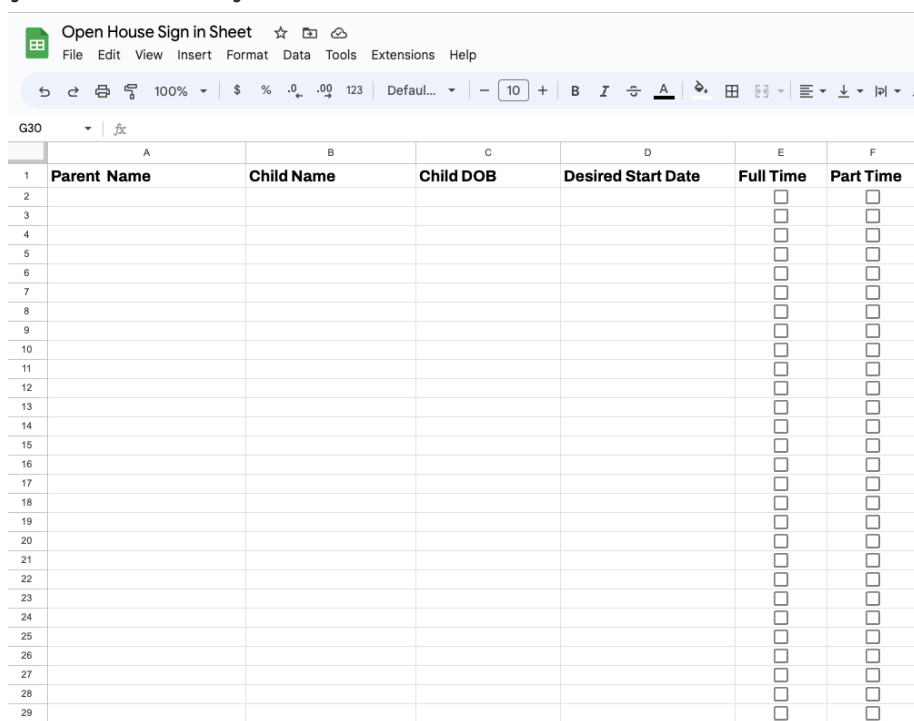
# Materials

Whether you have a group event or single families at a time, you want to always give them a little goodie bag as a “thank you” and to help them remember your program. This can look like a bag with a kids toy from the dollar store, some candy and your business card. Get creative and make a giveaway that matches your theme. Bubble wands for Bubbles and Babies or small packages of crayons for an Art Event. You can find many inexpensive gift ideas by searching on Google or [Pinterest](#). Your local dollar store or craft store can also be a source of ideas and inexpensive materials.



Craft activity from Greenwood Heights Playgroup.

When families arrive, have them sign in on a [sign in sheet](#) and afterwards use that to send thank you cards with your business card to all families!



The image shows a Google Sheet titled "Open House Sign in Sheet". The sheet has the following columns: Parent Name, Child Name, Child DOB, Desired Start Date, Full Time, and Part Time. The rows are numbered 1 through 29. The Full Time and Part Time columns contain checkboxes for each row.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Parent Name	Child Name	Child DOB	Desired Start Date	Full Time	Part Time
2					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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29					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Preparing Your Space

You want your space to make an amazing first impression! The goal is for families to feel at home and comfortable in your space. This means ensuring your space is clean and tidy and event materials are organized and easy to access. We recommend turning off screens for the duration of your event to minimize distractions. It may be worth considering removing any political affiliation materials from your space, especially if you want to appeal to the broadest number of families possible.

## Marketing Your Event

Marketing is absolutely necessary if you want to ensure that you have attendees at your event. While posting the event on Wonderschool and Facebook is a great way to get started, we recommend you also get the word out in your community through more traditional marketing means, such as flyers and word of mouth.

## Making Printables

You don't need to be an artist to make posters and flyers for your event! Wonderschool has created fill-in-the-blank templates for you to customize with an easy-to-use tool called Canva. In order to edit the templates you will first need to [create a Canva account](#). These accounts are free to create and use, and will enable you to copy existing templates and customize them for your own program.

## Making a Canva Account and Copying Templates

1. Click [here](#) to create your Canva account. We recommend using the same email address that you use for your Wonderschool account, but you can also continue with your Facebook or Google account if you want one less password to manage.
2. Once you have a Canva account created, choose from one of our templates below that you want to start with and click on the link.
  - a. [Bulletin Board Sign](#)
  - b. [Open House Flyer](#)
  - c. [Lawn Sign](#)
  - d. [Postcard](#)
3. Once you've chosen your template, click on the "Use template" purple button at the bottom of the page.



4. Then, you can watch this [brief video](#) to see an example of how to edit and customize these templates for your own use.

## Creating QR Codes

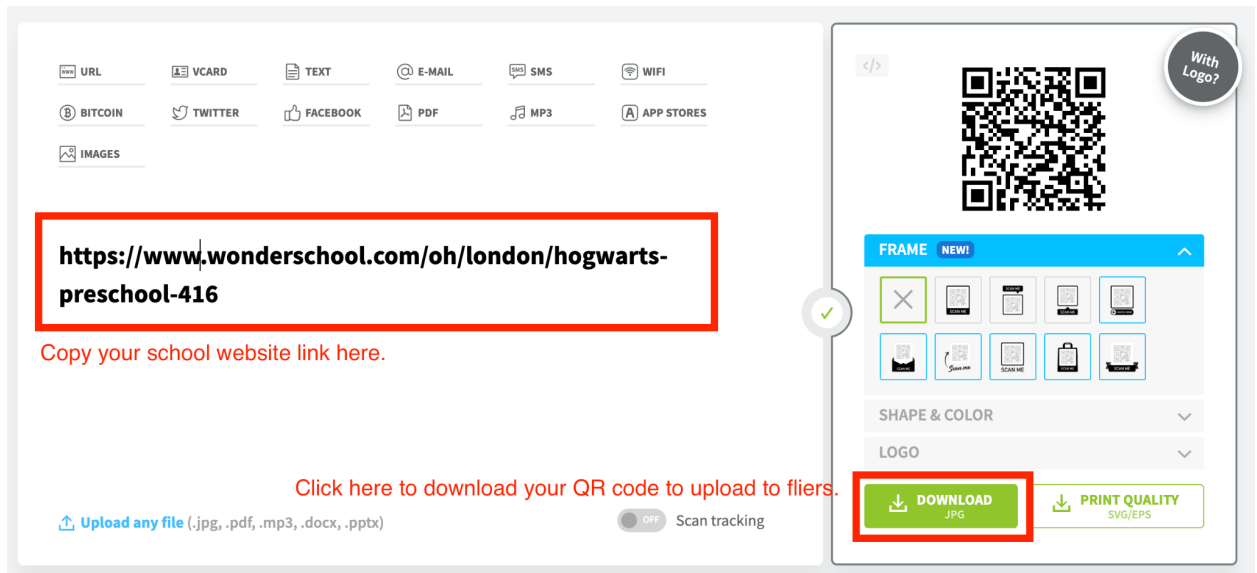
A QR-code is a type of bar-code that families can scan using the cameras on their phone to direct them to a specific website. QR-codes are a great addition to your printed materials to help direct families to your Wonderschool website so they can RSVP to your event or to learn more about your program. There are many free QR-code generators available online and we'll walk through an example.

1. We recommend using [this website](#) to create a personal QR-code.
2. Next, copy your personal referral link from your Wonderschool Dashboard.

**Share your personal referral link**  
Copy your unique link below to share your listing directly with parents to receive referral credit.

<https://wonderschool.com/ref/12139> [Copy Link](#)

3. From there return to the QR-code generator. Paste you website link in the center left box where it states “Enter your website, text or drop a file here”



4. Lastly, you’ll click the lime green “DOWNLOAD” button to get an image file of your QR-code. You can now add it to your printables like any other image.

## Printing

As mentioned in the Canva video, you can order prints directly through Canva for pickup or delivery directly to you (more information can be found [here](#)). You could also choose to do on-demand printing that is shipped directly to you through a company like [FedEx](#) or [UPS](#), or download them to your device and have them printed at shops such as OfficeMax, Office Depot, or a local printing shop.

## Distribution

While some of the printed material you’ll want to keep on-site for your event (postcards are great to have on hand), the rest you’ll want to distribute throughout your community. We encourage you to visit places in your community where families frequently visit and ask if you can post a flier there. Some ideas include:

- Pediatrician’s office
- Library
- Local preschools or elementary schools
- Children’s stores (toys, clothes)
- Dentist’s office
- Parks
- Sporting events - Little League fields or soccer fields are places where many families are gathered together

If you’re working during the standard business day and aren’t able to get out yourself



to distribute flyers, consider if there is someone you can ask to help distribute fliers. Don't be afraid to ask your family (parents, children, grandchildren) for help distributing or if any of your existing families would be open to taking a flyer to their workplace for posting.

## Running Your Event

When it is time for your event, think of kid friendly activities where the children can interact while the parents can look around, ask questions and learn about your



*Sensory table at Budding Blossoms NY*

program! One idea is to have activities relevant to the season or weather that children would do in your program. This might be having a sensory table with sand for summer or an animal craft that they can take home and remember how much fun their child had while visiting your program. You can see a full list of ideas in our [Event Catalog](#) at the end of this guide.

While you are interacting with families and children, have someone there to take pictures! You will be able to use these to share with the families who attended but also for future marketing of your program!

## Post-Event Follow Ups

Congratulations - you have successfully hosted your event! Now it's time to follow up with families and review your sign up sheet to see who did and did not attend and decide how to best follow up with all of your families. Using the sign in sheet and RSVP's, place families into the four categories seen below. Based on the category you can send the corresponding message to the family through text or email.

Family interest, good fit	Family maybe interested, maybe a good fit	Family not interested or a bad fit	Family sent an RSVP but did not attend
<p><i>Hello _____,</i></p> <p><i>It was such a pleasure meeting you at our open house. I believe your family would be a great addition to our program! If you are interested in moving forward, please let me know so I can send you an enrollment invitation.</i></p> <p><i>Please do let me know if you have any questions, I'd be happy to arrange a phone call this week.</i></p> <p><i>Best,</i> _____</p>	<p><i>Hello _____,</i></p> <p><i>It was such a pleasure meeting you at our open house. I'd love to answer any questions you may have about our program and enrollment process. Please let me know if you're free to talk this week and we can arrange a call.</i></p> <p><i>Best,</i> _____</p>	<p><i>Hello _____,</i></p> <p><i>It was such a pleasure meeting you at our event. Please let me know if you have any questions.</i></p> <p><i>Best,</i> _____</p>	<p><i>Hello _____,</i></p> <p><i>We missed you at our open house! Please let me know if you are interested in scheduling a tour of our program. I would love to meet you, show you our space, and answer any questions you have.</i></p> <p><i>Best,</i> _____</p>

Now that you have communicated with the families, let's look at the turn out of your event! You can use the below chart to help you track this data. This can be made in Google Sheets or click [here](#) and make a copy.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	<b>Parent Name</b>	<b>Child Name</b>	<b>Child DOB</b>	<b>RSVP</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Interested</b>	<b>Sent Follow Up</b>
2	Deb Smith	Hannah Smith	3/4/22	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Kevin Tate	Billy Tate	5/2/20	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes
4							
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6							
7							
8							
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You'll want to take this time to make notes of if you think this was a good day and time for your event. We encourage you to ask yourself the following questions:

- Was that the best time to have the event?
- Was the turn out better or not as good as you expected?
- Is this something you want to do again but tweak it a little?
- Do you think your marketing efforts were well received by the community?

Last but not least, share your photos on your Wonderschool and Facebook pages! If there are children's faces in the pictures please make sure you have obtained permission from the families before posting (feel free to use our photo release form [here](#)).

## Your Next Event

While we know planning your most recent event took a lot of time and energy, events are not a one-and-done activity. It's best when budgeting to think through how frequently you want to host events. Do you want to aim for once a month? Quarterly? How will you keep the momentum going within your community? These are all considerations to keep in mind - **best practices from our providers suggest that you should be hosting at least one event a month until your program is more than half full.**

Lastly, when you're hosting your next event we encourage you to use photos from your previous event when marketing. You can update your marketing materials with these photos or post them on your website/social media when organizing your next one.

# Event Idea Catalog

The below catalog are types of events we've seen Wonderschool programs host.

Event Idea	Description
Adult & Me Time	Design activities for guardians and children to do together - great examples include making a painting or cooking.
Art Day	Open ended art day! Easels, large paper, crayons, markers, clay paints – loose parts for older kids. You can set up various stations and focus on letting the kids be creative.
Baby Sign Language	Host an event targeting new moms where you teach basic baby sign language for new moms.
Backyard Play	An event that specifically is focused on highlighting your backyard or outdoor space, you can have yard games set up for the kids and adults.
Bilingual Story Time	If your program is bilingual this is a great way to demonstrate the strengths of your program with a bilingual reading circle.
Block Party	If your area is conducive to it, host a block party where you can close off the block and highlight parts of your program.
Book Swap	Encourage parents or families in your area to bring books that their children have outgrown that they can swap with other families to change up their collection.
Bubbles & Babies	Get various bubbles and bubble toys from your local store and host an event focused on play.
Cooking Activities	Easy cooking activities are great ways to focus and center your event. A great place to start is with a <a href="#">friendship fruit salad</a> activity.
Cultural Celebration Events	If there is a part of your culture you want to introduce or highlight you can design an event to introduce a special food or activity.
Holiday-centric Events	Trick-or-treating or pumpkin painting at Halloween, Easter egg hunts, or Valentine-making are all great places to start.
Gardening Event	You can get tiny paper cups from your local store, a bag of dirt, and some seeds. You can introduce children to the concept of gardening and kids can leave with their planted seeds.
Make and Take	Craft-centered day that you have the children focused on a

	craft they can take with them. Play dough, slime, musical instruments, tie-dye (kids bring shirts/socks, etc).
Open House	Allow children to come and play in your home, have lite refreshments for adults ready. This can be a great introductory event since it is relatively low-pressure.
Parents Night Out	You can extend your normal business hours an host an open house centered on the parents. This can be centered on having the parents getting to know each other and introducing your program.
Popsicles in the Park	Grab a cooler, a few bags of ice, and some popsicles and invite families to your local park. Be ready with fliers about your program and perhaps have some yard games ready for the kids to play with.
Puppet Show for Preschoolers	Great if you already have a set up for puppets, but you can have the kids play with their own puppets or do a brief storytime/show for them.
Reading Circle/Read-Aloud Day	Choose some favorite books and host a reading circle/read-aloud activity.
Sensory Play Day	Set up sand tables or individual trays with rice, dry beans, pasta, etc. You can have scoops and pouring kitchen utensils available for play.
Sidewalk Chalk Art Competition	Invite kids to come and participate in a sidewalk chalk art competition. You can have treats available for all the participants.
Sing-a-long Open House	You can find a local artist to come and play children's songs for 30-45 min of singing. Disney songs tend to be a big hit.
Snow Cone/Ice Cream Truck Day	A bigger spend, but you can inquire about renting a snow cone or ice cream truck to come to your event. This would be great if partnered with a larger community event, such as a block party.
Water Play Day	Set up a water table and sprinklers in your outdoor play area and invite families to come and meet each other.
Yoga Day	Lead guardians + children through a mini yoga session.