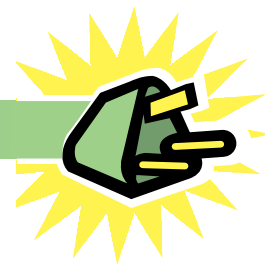


Decoding Technology

Program Management Tools

by Tim Walker and Chip Donohue



Managing a child care program involves many complex tasks and daily challenges for administrators. However, with the right set of tech tools you can become a more effective and efficient manager which will enhance program quality and improve responses to your staff and the children, parents, families, and community you serve.

Tech Terms

- **Child care management package:** Software designed to handle specific child care administrative tasks such as tracking attendance of children and staff, billing, monitoring accounts receivable, managing child, family and personnel records, processing payroll, paying bills, and creating financial reports . . . just to name a few. These software packages are often available in modular format so that each program can select the features they want and need to manage their operations and finances efficiently.
- **Application suite:** A combination of different software such as word processing, spreadsheets, database management, desktop publishing, personal information management, and Web authoring bundled together. Programs in an integrated application suite look and act the same way, making it easy for users to transfer data from one application to another. Popular application suites include Microsoft Office, Corel WordPerfect Office, and Lotus SmartSuite.

Tech Tools

There are many types of software and the list of new programs grows daily. Keeping up with this can be an overwhelming chore for even the advanced technology professional. Nevertheless, there are some program management tools that are essential for all early childhood administrators. A child care management package brings together many of the features and functions you need, but you may find other applications and tech tools useful for specific functions. Whether you choose a child care management software package, an application suite, or a combination of the two you'll need:

- A word processing program for creating letters, memos, newsletters, fliers, forms, handbooks, proposals, and many other text-based documents. Popular word processing programs include Corel WordPerfect and Microsoft Word.
- A spreadsheets program for managing budgets, cash-flow forecasting, and completing other financial and analytical tasks. Popular spreadsheets programs include Lotus 1-2-3 and Microsoft Excel.
- A database management program for tracking child and family records, personnel records, and supplies and equipment inventory. Popular database management programs include Microsoft Access and FileMaker Pro.
- A desktop publishing program for creating newsletters and fliers. Popular desktop publishing programs include Adobe PageMaker and QuarkXPress.

- A Personal Information Manager (PIM) to organize contacts, tasks, dates, reminders, and a variety of other personal information. Popular PIM programs include Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Organizer.
- A Web authoring program to prepare word processing documents or desktop publishing files for your program Web page. Popular Web authoring programs include Macromedia Dreamweaver and Microsoft FrontPage.

Tech Tips

While the number of tools may seem endless, try selecting a few new programs to *test drive* occasionally. You may discover a more resourceful way of completing complex administrative tasks.

- Explore the range of functions and features available in a child care management packages and *demo* those that seem to best meet your needs.
- Use a desktop publishing program to layout and design your next newsletter instead of a standard word processing application.



Tim Walker is technology coordinator for the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University. He oversees all technology-related initiatives including training, instructional design and delivery, Web site development, and technical assistance.

Chip Donohue, PhD, is the director of Early Childhood Professional Development Programs in the School of Continuing Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



where he develops and teaches online courses for child care administrators and offers eTeaching Institutes for early childhood faculty and trainers.

- Put aside the paper and pencil and try managing your schedule, contacts, and “to do” lists with a PIM.
- Assemble your program’s existing literature and promotional materials into an organized sequence of pages using a Web authoring program and publish to the Internet.

Tech Links

- Adobe PageMaker — www.adobe.com/products/page-maker
- Corel WordPerfect Office — www.corel.com/wordperfect
- FileMaker Pro — www.filemaker.com
- Lotus 1-2-3 — <http://lotus.com/products/product2.nsf/wdocs/123home>
- Macromedia Dreamweaver — www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver
- Microsoft Office — www.microsoft.com/office
- QuarkXPress — www.quark.com/products/xpress

Source

Walker, T. (2003). *Microsoft Office XP: A Training Manual for Early Childhood Administrators*. The Center for Early Childhood Leadership: Wheeling, IL.

Questions to ask when choosing a child care management software package:

- What tasks do I most want/need a management software package for?
- What features and functions do I need?
- How much can I afford to spend?
- How much training and technical support is provided for set up and ongoing operation?
- Can I *test drive* a complete, working demonstration copy?
- Is it easy to use, flexible, and reliable?
- What standard features are included? What features will cost extra?
- Is it compatible with the current version of Windows?
- What is the company’s reputation for product quality, customer service, and tech support?
- How satisfied are current users with the product and support?

Coming in March/April 2005:

Decoding Technology:
Staff Training and Parent Education Tools

Buyer's Guide to Management Software

This directory is a partial listing of companies providing management software. Inclusion does not imply endorsement by *Exchange*. To request free information from these companies, visit www.ChildCareExchange.com or circle the number for each company of interest on the Product Inquiry Card located between pages 64 and 65.

The AccuTrak Group LLP

Michael Spevacek, Steve Cummings
5376 Temple court
Madison, WI 53705
(608) 233-7841
mail@AccuTrak2000.com
www.AccuTrak2000.com
Circle 116 on Free Information Card

The AccuTrak Integrity System is the longest running Windows-based automated claims processing system for sponsors of the CACFP. Providers can complete their claims with easy to use scannable forms or on the Internet. AccuTrak calculates claim reimbursements as well as detects block claiming patterns that require a home visit.

ChildPlus Software

Melissa Trifiro
1117 Perimeter Center West, #W300
Atlanta, GA 30339
(800) 888-6674, ext. 250
exchange@childplus.com • www.childplus.com
Circle 117 on Free Information Card

For over 17 years ChildPlus has produced the nation's premier software for helping Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K, and Community Action Agencies improve the lives of children. Our portfolio of products and services provides a comprehensive user-friendly approach to addressing your management, reporting, compliance, and training needs.

CMSC — Maggey Software

Gale C. Cohen-Frank
4633 North 1st Avenue, #1
Tucson, AZ 85718
(800) 462-4439
galefrank@maggey.com • www.maggey.com
Circle 118 on Free Information Card

MAGGEY Software is at the head of the class! Want a software that's easy to use and will not put a dent in your wallet? Look no further. MAGGEY gives you the necessary tools to successfully operate your business. Prices starting at \$129.00. Visit us at www.maggey.com to order your free demo.

Emerging Technologies

Yvonne Brown
PO Box 1539
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067
(800) 729-4445
sherri@etwebsite.com • www.etwebsite.com
Circle 119 on Free Information Card

Office Center is loved by thousands of owners and directors just like you. Since 1993 Emerging Technologies has been dedicated to serving the child

*care profession. We are a progressive company offering all the software solutions to meet your needs and budgets. Call us for a FREE demo today!
(800) 729-4445.*

EZ-CARE2 Center Management Software

Doug Schoenberg
540 Pennsylvania Avenue, #200
Fort Washington, PA 19034
(800) 220-4111
info@softerware.com
www.softerware.com
Circle 120 on Free Information Card

Looking for easy and flexible software? EZ-CARE2 provides you the tools to manage your center better, faster, and easier! • A complete solution for information & fee management, schedule & attendance, center access, and more. • Easily customize screens and reports. • Fully integrated accounting modules or Quickbooks™ integration. Free demo CD!

Lyric Software

Carole Richter
3021 Golden Lantern, #E, Box 115
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677-5993
(949) 481-4521
carole@lyricsoftware.com
www.lyricsoftware.com
Circle 121 on Free Information Card

SchoolBooks is the best school data management software designed especially to work side by side with QuickBooks accounting software. We are competitively priced and easy to use. Our customers are more than pleased with SchoolBooks' performance and we believe you will be, too. We offer a full no-risk money back guarantee. For more information please call or visit our web site.

Kressa Software — School Leader

Janet Mazza
3724 Hunter Isle Drive
Orlando, FL 32837
(800) 894-7442
sales@kressa.com • www.schoolleader.com
Circle 122 on Free Information Card

Professional preschool/childcare management software to successfully manage one or multiple centers. Major features include complete student/employee/classroom tracking, time-clock, integrated accounting, credit card processing, multi-site manager, and BIOMETRIC (fingerprint) door control. Visit our web site or call to order your free demo package.

Orgamation Technologies, Inc.

Ms. Nibha Bhargava
319 Littleton Road, #204
Westfield, MA 01886
(877) 326-7900
dcmsinfo@orgamation.com
www.orgamation.com
Circle 123 on Free Information Card

iCare is the most highly customized software, yet it lets you create forms and reports for an overall control of the office, classrooms, and special activities. It's simple for new users and suitable for the most advanced. It integrates with ADP, QuickBooks, and other packages. Was previously sold as DCMS9003.

Personalized Software

Chris Luz
PO Box 359
Phoenix, OR 97535
(800) 553-2312
sales@childcaremanager.com
www.childcaremanager.com
Circle 124 on Free Information Card

With Childcare Manager you avoid the headaches and aggravation of designing your own management system from a set of expensive modules or components. You get a complete system that includes everything you need to run your center in one easy-to-use program and at one low price. Comparable modular systems cost two to four times more than Childcare Manager.

ProCare Software

Sales
3581 Excel Drive
Medford, OR 97504
(800) 338-3884
info@procaresoftware.com
www.procaresoftware.com
Circle 125 on Free Information Card

ProCare is the most widely used and recommended childcare management software in the world. ProCare provides everything needed to effectively manage single site and multiple site locations. From accounting, to time-tracking, to electronic payment processing, with free, unsurpassed support, ProCare is your complete management solution. Call for a free demonstration package.

The Pre-School Partner by On-Q Software, Inc.

Teri Cajigas
13764 Southwest 11th Street
Miami, FL 33184
(800) 553-2862
info@on-qsoftware.com
www.on-qsoftware.com
Circle 126 on Free Information Card

Center management software designed to assist you in the functions of family and child registration, staff management, billing, receivables, and tracking of vaccinations, and much more. Free 45 day trial program.

Private Advantage Software

Paul Ziegler
2777 Yulupa Avenue, #302
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
(800) 238-7015
service@privateadv.com
Circle 127 on Free Information Card

Since 1991 Private Advantage has been serving the needs of child care centers, preschools, and schools. It is the management software directors/owners love to use. Affordable, flexible, and powerful. Contact us for a free demonstration packet at (800) 238-7015 or e-mail: service@privateadv.com.

Shah Software, Inc.

Jagat Shah
PO Box 9445
Midland, TX 79708
(800) 968-2748
info@shahsoftware.com
www.shahsoftware.com
Circle 128 on Free Information Card

CACPF Software system is a comprehensive tool for Head Start and Daycares that need an easy to use food management program. It helps monitor food inventory and purchases — helps with Meal Planning and Preparation and ensures that your menus are USDA compliant. Inventory is dynamically maintained and updated automatically on purchases and consumption.

Directory of Child Care Management Packages

This is a partial listing of companies providing management software products and services. Inclusion on this list does not imply endorsement by the authors or Exchange.

CCA Solutions, *Childcare Administrator* — www.childcareadmin.com/
ChildPlus Software, *ChildPlus* — www.childplus.com/
Childcare Ware, *Childcare Ware* — www.childcareware.com/
Children's Choice Learning Centers, *Choice Tracking* — www.childrenschoice.com/choice_tracking/
CMSC, Ltd., *MAGGEY Software* — www.maggey.com/
Daymark Software Systems, *School Partner* — www.daymarksys.com/
Emerging Technologies, *Office Center* — www.etwebsite.com/
Focus Technology Solutions, *'bob' the Child Care Centre Manager* — www.focustechnologysolutions.com/
Kask Software, *Childcare Professional* — www.kasksoftware.com/ccp.htm
Kinderstreet Corporation, *KinderStreet* — www.kinderstreet.com/
Kressa Software, Corporation *SchoolLeader* — www.schoolleader.com
Maplesoft Enterprises, *DayCare 2000* — www.maplesoft.net/index.html
Mt. Taylor Programs, *Private Advantage* — www.privateadv.com/
On-Q Software, *Pre-School Partner* — www.on-qsoftware.com/
Orgamation, *iCare* — www.orgamation.com/
Personalized Software, *Childcare Manager* — www.childcaremanager.com/
[childcaremanager/](http://www.childcaremanager.com/)
Professional Solutions, *ProCare* — www.procaresoftware.com
SDS Software Solutions, *DayCare Information Systems* — www.daycaresoftware.com/
SoftCare, *Softcare* — www.soft-care.com/
SofterWare Inc., *EZ-CARE2* — www.softerware.com/asp/careinfo.asp
SofterWare, Inc., *KidsCare* — www.softerware.com/kidscare/