

Enchant parents with your enrollment materials

Being organized, respectful of parents' time and consistent

“Socrates said, ‘Know thyself.’ I say, ‘Know thy users.’ And guess what? They don’t think like you do.”

Joshua Brewer
Designer

“I strive for two things in design: simplicity and clarity. Great design is born of those two things.”

Lindon Leader
Designer of the FedEx logo

Pull out every piece of paper that will be handed to a parent in the process of enrolling their child at your school. Look at each piece, and the whole group, as a new parent would. Or for extra credit: ask a parent to do this and tell you what they think.

Create a one-page application form.

An application form indicates parents wish their child to attend. Registration is the process of completing all the subsequent forms: media release, consent to treat, financial contract. etc. New families are applying--don't hit them over the head with the whole enchilada.

- **Design it so families can register more than one child** without having to rewrite information that would be the same (parents, address, etc.).
- **Do not ask for this information again** on subsequent forms.
- **Design it to match** the rest of your registration materials.
- **Use this form for new families** and as the re-enrollment form for current families at your spring open house (more about open houses in future messages).
- **Extra credit:** For re-enrolling families print out the information you have in your school database (Renweb, Small School Minder, etc.) on a form for them to correct as needed and sign.

Review and revise all registration materials to match each other.

Do your materials contribute to a sense that your school is organized, consistent and values the time of parents?

- **Don't ask for the same information multiple times** on different pieces of paper.
 - » Example: How many times do you ask for a parent's name, address and phone numbers?

- **Review each piece of information you ask for--do you really need it?**
 - » Example: Will your school really use the *address* of the family physician or emergency contact person?
- **Give every page the same overall look.** Use the same font.
 - » **Retype the forms you use from the conference and union.** They are great forms but they don't (gasp) match each other or the rest of your materials. So your school appears haphazard.
 - » **One big exception:** I would leave the "Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk" form just as it is. It has been so unpalatable to parents in the past that it should look visually different than everything else from your school.
- **Copy all forms from an original.** Copies of copies of mimeographs look awful.
- **Use nice quality paper--24-28 lb. text, white, matte finish (glossy is hard to write on).**
- **Proofread, proofread, proofread and have someone else proofread.** If I'm trusting you to teach my child spelling and grammar, you better have flawless spelling and grammar.

Before you copy and collate your redesigned materials, ask a kind, but frank, parent to review what you've done. Remember, parents don't think like you do. They may have different ideas about simplicity and clarity.

Credits:

Rick Nelson:

Thank you for allowing me to use your materials from Chico Oaks.

Katie Richmond:

Thank you for allowing me to use your materials from Foothills.

Binder tab: October

School size: All