



Notifications and alerts reduce admin, increase efficiency

Customer

Central Kids Early Education

Industry

Education

Need

- Efficient communications and great customer experience

Benefits

- Reduced administration
- Increased efficiency
- Improved customer experience
- Reliable, fast messaging

'Everyone can see the benefits of using this efficient and affordable communication channel which has proved highly effective in ... getting required documentation completed, encouraging parents to participate in center events and ... during emergency situations.'

Rhonnie Nairn, Systems and Administration Officer, Central Kids Early Education

Central Kids Early Education (Central Kids) is a registered charitable trust providing high quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education and care for families living across the Central North Island of New Zealand. The goal for children attending its 48 kindergartens and eight full-day childcare centers is that they make the transition to school as confident and competent learners, inspired for active learning and supportive of inclusion.

An important part of providing this goal is to communicate effectively with whānau (parents and family). A key element of the communication strategy is Info-Txt, which is an integrated text messaging facility from Infocare Systems using technology from Bulletin (from the MessageMedia Group).

Engagement with and responses from parents have improved significantly since Info-Txt was introduced in 2012. Central Kids has found that text messaging is a more effective method of communication than using traditional email. Messages are received instantly because parents always have their phones with them.

'At Central Kids, we use Info-Txt as a form of communication with whānau across our entire organization, both from head office and within each kindergarten or early learning center. Everyone can see the benefits of using this efficient and affordable communication channel, which has proved highly effective in gathering information from whānau, getting required documentation completed, encouraging parents to participate in center events and, of course, communication during emergency situations, such as fire, floods and earthquakes,' says Rhonnie Nairn, Systems and Administration Officer at Central Kids.

Some examples of how Central Kids uses text messaging are:

- **Reminders about events:** Confirmation of Matariki celebrations (Māori New Year), excursions, school visits, fundraisers and other events.
- **Engaging with families:** Informing parents that their child has settled, reminders of timetable changes, notifications of lost and found property or enquiries about a child's health if they are absent.
- **Ministry of Education compliance:** Informing parents when forms need signing or asking for identification and immunization documents.
- **Center closures and emergencies:** Advising whānau about any closures due to emergency situations such as flooding, poor weather or holidays.

CASE STUDY

REMINDERS AND NOTIFICATIONS: Notifications and alerts reduce admin, increase efficiency

- **Enrolment management:** Checking if a child is returning, reminding families when their child is due to start, and welcome messages.
- **Filling available spaces:** Offering a space to parents when a child is away, therefore opening an opportunity for another child to attend.

Central Kids has experienced many direct and indirect benefits by utilizing Info-Txt, such as:

Efficient group communication: A message is typed once and sent to individuals, selected groups, specific kindergarten families or the entire center enrolments.

Reduced administrative workload: Using such a simple system has reduced workloads, especially the administrative burden on staff generating emails or letters to parents, or chasing up responses. Staff are not required to make time-consuming phone calls to parents that may or may not be received or returned. A text **'says it all'** and parents know why they are contacted when they receive them.

Instant communication: Recipients replies are instantly available to the kindergarten/center who sent the originating message. The instantaneous nature of the communication helps both Central Kids and parents. As one parent says, **'[It] saved me a wasted trip when the center was closed due to weather'**.

Records of communication: A complete historical log is available for all text messages sent and all replies received.

Help for migrant families: For those whose first language is not English, reading texts is often easier than listening or speaking. They may also have translators loaded on their phone so can automatically translate messages.

Affordability: The service is free for parents to receive texts and, as parents usually have text messaging included in their mobile phone plans, replies are free too.

Reliability: In areas of limited mobile coverage, text messages are much more reliable than phone calls.

Ease of use: No training was required for staff using the system, as it is very simple and they are already familiar with text messaging.

For Central Kids, proof of the system's success is the feedback from the parents, with comments such as: **'I feel more connected with the kindergarten and my child knowing they can message me at any time'**, **'The reminders are invaluable'**, **'Quick and easy, love it'**, and **'I'm able to reply straight away'**.

MessageMedia Benefits



ON TIME DELIVERY

Best in class gateway with 99.95% uptime



SCALABLE MESSAGING

A technology platform built to grow with your business



24/7 SUPPORT

Our dedicated team are ready to take your call