



How to Succeed In the Kids Business

The kids' business is a lucrative and rewarding niche of the eyewear industry, as well as a competitive arena in which eye care professionals must know how to sell to children. Whether you're already in the kids' business or are ready to add kids' frames to your current offerings, the following guidelines can help you succeed.

There are a few things to consider before taking the leap. The key is to know your area; this can help determine if there is potential for kids' business at your dispensary. A specific analysis of your own customer base is a great place to start.

Customers

Is your customer base growing? Are many of your customers parents, or becoming parents? If so, the kids' business may provide a great opportunity for your dispensary.

Surroundings

Consider your surroundings. Is your dispensary located in an area that has day care centers, schools, or retail stores (e.g. clothing, footwear, toys) targeted to parents and children? If so, this indicates a potential demand for kids eye care and a base of prospective customers close to your dispensary.

Competition

Don't forget to analyze your competition. Do other dispensaries in your area cater to children? If so, visit the dispensary to see the range of kids' eyewear they carry, as well as the services they offer. Think about what you might do differently.

However, if you don't find dispensaries in your area offering kids' eyewear, there may be a need and opportunity for you to position your practice as the children's eyewear retailer in your area.

Customer Survey

A great way to learn more about your customers is to survey them. They are your captive audience! The right questions can help you determine if the kids business is right for your dispensary. You'll learn the best ways to reach customers, and if there potential to increase your revenue.

When you're ready to take the next step, think about how you will market your dispensary.



Establish yourself as a kids specialist

There are 76.1 million children under the age of 18 in the United States¹; and 25% of them have an undiagnosed vision problem that can interfere with learning and behavior.²

If there are few practices in your area that sell kids frames, establish yourself as the “Kids Specialist” in your area.

Position the Importance of Kids Screening

Advise parents on the benefits of yearly screenings and reinforce that you offer year-round service. Many parents want to save money, but will often spend more for the reassurance that their child’s eye health is in the hands of a specialist. Demonstrate your experience to put parents at ease and gain their trust.

Reach out to your local schools to get involved in their screening programs. Advertise your services in local newspapers, social media, and other retail locations. Spreading the word in your community can greatly improve your kids’ business.

Offer incentives

Everyone likes an incentive. Consider offering free screenings or coupons to bring new customers into your practice. If you are comfortable using social media and the Internet, you may want to consider “deal of the day” websites, like Groupon, that sell coupons and gift certificates redeemable at participating companies. These services can be effective for garnering new customers, if your offer is enticing enough.

Special family pricing or lens packages can help you increase sales volume. You may also consider offering frame and lens packages.

Attract kids, right from the start

Create a dispensary that is kid friendly, and attracts kids right from the start. Position your kids’ displays in front of your dispensary to grab interest as soon as kids step inside. Use fun, colorful P.O.P like bright, hanging banners, counter cards, and posters to reinforce the different styles you carry. Also, provide mirrors at comfortable heights for kids, so they can get a good view of their frames.

Carry the right mix of frames

It’s important to carry the right mix of frames based on your demographics. Again, look at your

¹ Childstats.gov

² the Vision Council of America



competition to see which kids' brands are on their frame boards, and observe what they are doing to attract kids. Be critical of the information you find and put it to work for your practice.

Provide a selection of products that will appeal to all of your customers by offering at least 5 to 6 different brands from 2 to 3 experienced vendors. Your sales consultants can help you determine which brands would work best for your demographic. You can further enhance your dispensary's offerings by providing brands and styles in a variety of price points.

Create a Balance of Price Points

For every shape and style, there is a price point to match. The important thing is deciding which price points work best for your customers. Compile data to better understand your target demographic. Visit other dispensaries in your area to better understand pricing strategies for comparable brands and styles. Study your eyewear sales over the course of a year to determine how much customers in your area are willing to spend. Particularly important in today's technological age, review Internet sites to determine popular price points, and view commentary and reviews from users of eyewear retailers.

Managed Care

When selling to customers who are taking advantage of a managed care plan, it's important to position yourself as an expert on eye care. Sell what looks good on the child and has the best optics for their needs. Offer options in a menu style that lists frame and lens packages as Good, Better, and Best to show the benefits of each price point. Try suggesting that the customer use their managed care funds as a "discount" toward the eyewear their child *really* wants. Stress the benefits of quality optics and the importance of a well-warranted frame for active children.

To boost sales, don't tell managed care customers that frames are "not an option with their plan" because the cost is not completely absorbed by the plan. Instead, tell them how their managed care plan will significantly reduce the cost of the frames that fit their medical needs and style. Since some kids often have to be reminded to wear their glasses, many parents will be willing to buy out-of-plan frames if their child likes them, to ensure the child will wear them.

Apply the concept of Critical Mass

By definition, critical mass is the size or amount of something that is required before an activity or event can take place. At ClearVision, we apply this concept to the large and varied selection of products we offer. You can reach your critical mass by applying these factors:

- Knowledge: learn everything you can about the kids business
- Passion: love what you do
- Imagination: "see" your goals before they become reality



- Commitment: offer a large and varied selection
- Patience: allowing time for your kids business to mature

Many dispensaries that have achieved success have made a commitment to implementing these qualities over a long period of time. To succeed in the kids business takes time, but when you get there, the result can be astounding.

To learn more about how to succeed in the kids business, contact ClearVision Optical at 800.645.3733, or visit us online at cvoptical.com/kidsbiz.

Sources:

- www.childstats.gov
- The Vision Council of America