

Baby Sensory – Franchisee Case Study



Lisa Reed joined the Baby Sensory team in 2008 when she became the first franchisee in the North East region of the UK, running classes in Whitley Bay and Heaton near Newcastle upon Tyne. It can be more difficult to establish the Baby Sensory programme in an area where our brand is less well known and Lisa initially struggled to get fill her classes. In her first class Lisa had just one parent attend with twins, she now has 110 parents and babies attending her classes every week.

In this interview, Lisa talks about her experience of launching Baby Sensory in a new region and how having established her own successful business she is now growing her business through the acquisition of a second territory.

How did you first find out about Baby Sensory?

I was doing a search for sensory toys for the nursery job I was in at the time and the Baby Sensory website popped up. I thought it looked very interesting and wanted to learn more so I sent off for an information pack. At the time I was trying to introduce more sensory play into the nursery I was working in, I wasn't even looking for a complete career change.

What was your job before you started your own Baby Sensory franchise?

I was a senior nursery nurse for a nursery and was in charge of 2 baby rooms Birth-12months and 12-18 Months.

What hobbies and interests do you have?

I don't really have many hobbies apart from my horse she takes up most of my spare time.

What is your Baby Sensory Territory?

My baby sensory territory is in the North East region of England. It is spread out as the North East has many rural areas.

When did you start running Baby Sensory classes?

I started running baby sensory in October 2008.

How many Baby Sensory Classes do you run every week?

I now run 6 classes in a week in 3 different locations within my territory

How many babies attend your classes each week?

I have 110 babies in a week that attend my baby sensory classes

How do you see your Baby Sensory business growing over the next 2 years?

I already have one Toddler Sense sub franchisee who started running classes in the middle of 2011. I am also in the progress of finalising contracts with another sub franchisee who will run Baby Sensory in my second territory. In 2 years I would like to be running 8 classes in a week in my own territory and possibly have one more sub running Toddler Sense in my second territory

What has been your most successful strategy for finding new customers?

I have tried a few different ways to promote my classes I would say that word of mouth has been my most successful strategy as my reputation has always been key for me. I also advertise in a little local baby and toddler magazine (Little Pages) which has also proved to be a good method of promotion. I also take full advantage of the Netmums and regularly post on the local notice board.

What do you enjoy most about running your Baby Sensory business?

I love it all. I enjoy seeing all the babies and mums having fun in my class there is nothing better than seeing all your hard work pay off and hear everyone talking about how much they love coming to Baby Sensory.

What has been the greatest challenge you have had to overcome when setting up your Baby Sensory business?

The biggest challenge I have had to face was starting Baby Sensory in an area where nobody had ever heard of it. I spent a lot of time doing market research and talking to mums about my classes. I think it's important to look at your location and try not to compare it to others running classes as each location is different and things work differently in different areas. I came up with a local price plan as after doing my market research I discovered a lot of the parents loved the programme and the classes but couldn't pay the full amount all in one go. I truly believe this has made a huge difference to my classes.

What is your greatest achievement?

My great achievement has been opening Baby Sensory classes in a new area, building up my reputation and knowing that I have managed to do it all on my own. I get great satisfaction from this.