

## **Baby Sensory Case Study - Elaine Allan**

Elaine Allan is a mother of three children, two teenagers and an older son who is in the Royal Navy. She decided to start up her own business in August 2007. Having investigated a number of alternatives, Elaine chose to take on a Baby Sensory franchise and she became the first Baby Sensory franchisee in Edinburgh when her classes opened in October 2007. Elaine now runs successful classes, supports new Baby Sensory franchisees in East Scotland and has just taken on a new Class Leader to help run her classes.

### **What were you doing before you decided to take on a Baby Sensory franchise?**

I had been a midwife for a number of years and whilst I loved working with the parents and babies, I did find it was difficult to reconcile the anti social hours with the demands of bringing up two children on my own.

### **Why did you consider franchising?**

Having worked as a midwife, I was not afraid of hard work and long hours and I loved meeting people. When I decided upon a change of career, I was looking for a job where I was confident my family and I would benefit from the results of my endeavors. I considered setting up my own business but as a single parent, I could not afford to fail. I therefore decided that taking on a franchise where the concept was already working in other areas would be a safer option. I also had very little business experience so I knew that the support of the franchisor would be of great value to me.

### **Why did you choose the Baby Sensory Franchise?**

I wanted to continue working with parents and their young babies and was keen to do something that really helped the parents and babies in my local community. With my experience as a midwife I looked at a range of the available classes and decided that the structure of the Baby Sensory programme was perfect because:

- the classes were designed specifically for babies;
- the session plans included a wide range of activities for babies;
- every week is different to maintain the interest for parents;
- each session includes an opportunity for parents to meet and socialise.

I was also keen to have a job that I could fit in with my home life and Baby Sensory are keen to allow franchisees to maintain a sensible work life balance.

### **Have things worked out for you?**

Following a very challenging first 12 months during which I had to work hard to establish my new business, things are now going really well. I have nearly 200 parents and babies signed up to attend my classes every week, I work closely with the other Baby Sensory class leaders in the area and we are now looking forward to our big Summer Event, Zoo Babies, which will be held at Edinburgh Zoo. This will be a great day out for all of the Baby Sensory customers in Edinburgh where they can bring their babies to special themed Baby Sensory session and then enjoy a day at the zoo with their babies.

**How have things worked out with your family?**

My youngest son has helped me with the technical aspects of running my own business like using my PC to keep up with the administration. When my daughter is not at school/ college she loves to come along to the classes and help me. My oldest son has been brilliant, providing support and encouragement for me to take this big step and he and his fiancée are always showing a keen interest in how I am getting on. All three children love the fact that I am running my own business and that I am so happy.

The last 18 months have just flown by and I look forward to running the classes every week.

Baby Sensory director Ian Sharland had this to say about how Elaine had managed to run her business as a single parent. "Elaine has been a delight to work with. She is extremely self motivated. She involves her children in what she is doing and they fully support her. She is never short of new ideas to grow her business and the fact that she is a single parent has never had any adverse effect on her ability to run a successful business."