

Doing it for the kids

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Everything from sport to languages, maths and dance caters for a wide range of interests and abilities. Many enable a franchisee to make a real difference to children's lives, so they bring high levels of personal satisfaction. They also tend to be less expensive than other types of franchise – in some cases the initial cost is less than \$10,000.

While successful franchisees come from all walks of life, all age groups and both sexes, these types of franchises have a particular appeal for women with children of their own. They can provide a real, workable alternative to the rigid demands of full-time work and the pressures of child care. Younger children can join in classes or groups and there are franchises which operate only in school hours. For mothers who are motivated to succeed in business, the combination of flexibility and opportunity can be exhilarating.

Soccajoeys

It's official – Australian kids are soccer mad. The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that outdoor soccer is by far the most popular organised sport for boys over the age of five and is rapidly gaining favour with girls.

Stacy Alogdellis sees no reason for children to wait until they start school to enjoy the benefits. He established

Soccajoeys as a way of developing preschoolers' physical and social skills in a fun environment. Designed for children aged between three and five years, the activities include skill demonstrations, games and instructional participation.

"Young soccer enthusiasts experience this program in an indoor environment, using toddler-safe equipment," he says. "They're coached and mentored by professionals as their parents look on."

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While the business was established in 2007, franchising began only recently – the first franchise will be operating in Sydney from January 2010.

"There is heavy demand for this kind of program and franchising was the only way to satisfy the need," says Alogdellis. "The Soccajoeys vision is to be the

leading brand in childhood development through sport and introduce this highly accredited program to Australian parents with children to offer the children the best possible start to life. In order to achieve that aim we are looking to penetrate every Australian state."

Franchisees don't need to be brilliant soccer players themselves – a four week training program teaches all the necessary skills and there is a high level of ongoing support. The \$30,000 to \$50,000 initial investment includes advertising and marketing as well as access to Soccajoeys centralised call centre facility which handles parents' inquiries and organises registrations to the classes.

"We're looking for people who are dedicated to running a successful business and who have the ability and passion to coach preschool children," says Alogdellis. "Our coaches get a real buzz from seeing the quiet and shy little children who turn up for their first session beaming with confidence as they develop their physical, social and educational skills. And there's nothing to match the



MagiKats

thrill of knowing that children look up to you as a role model. Our coaches love the satisfaction of knowing they're having such a positive effect on young children's development."

Readwell

Throughout her teaching career, Catherine McLennan was fascinated by the fact that some children picked up reading easily while others struggled. When she first saw the Readwell program, which uses a unique method to fast-track the remediation of reading problems in both children and adults, it seemed to make perfect sense.

"I had always enjoyed teaching but I began to feel frustrated by all the other tasks thrust upon teachers these days," she says. "Readwell gave me an opportunity to teach without all of the other hassles – and it's a great opportunity to run a home based business which helps children reach their potential."

McLennan bought the first franchise in Sydney's Sutherland Shire back in 1996. Then, when the opportunity arose to purchase the NSW franchise, she jumped at it.

"I appointed a manager at Sutherland and the business is running very successfully," she says. "Now I'm looking forward to making the program available to as many students as possible through the appointment of franchisees throughout NSW."

McLennan counts herself lucky to have been guided by Sylvia and Danny Wilson, founders of the internationally-successful Bark Busters franchise who have recently set up their own franchise consultancy.

"I believe that if you're going to ask people to put their faith in you, you have to be sure you're offering something worthwhile," she says. "Sylvia and Danny helped me to feel confident that all of the policies and procedures were in place to ensure effective franchising and attract the right people."

An initial investment of just \$10,000 includes three days of training, ongoing support and help with local and regional marketing.

As well as helping students who needed to improve their reading skills and comprehension the program has been successful in helping alleviating problems associated with dyslexia and the challenge of having English as a second language.

"It is a wonderful feeling when you make a huge difference in the life of a child," says McLennan. "I love it when I run into past students who still remember my name years later, or say things like 'Look, mum, it's the reading lady'. And I admit I can get a bit teary myself when parents are overwhelmed by the fact that their children are starting to read after just 10 or 12 lessons."

Kindy Dance Time

A unique, creative dance program, Kindy Dance Time helps toddlers and pre-schoolers gain an appreciation of dance in a fun and caring environment. Classes are age specific, from two to five years, and the method is based on the latest in early childhood education and research.

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"Our philosophy is to maintain a very low-stress environment for the children," says director and owner Lara Gandini. "We have an emphasis on parental involvement, we don't have concerts and there's no formal uniform."

Gandini has been teaching dance at the highest levels for almost 20 years. However, franchisees don't need to have been professional dancers themselves. They might be experienced in music or drama or have taken dance classes as a child. The initial investment of \$18,000 plus set-up costs includes professional development and training as well as marketing and promotion, business coaching and product and syllabus training.

"What franchisees must have is a genuine love of children and a confident and energetic personality," says Gandini. "Kindy Dance Time is also a perfect business opportunity for those seeking a work and life balance. As we operate

within school hours, we have particular appeal for parents of school-aged children."

There is also the satisfaction of the job itself.

"With children in this age group, each class is completely different. Seeing the faces of some of our Kindy Dance Timers as they respond to music and have the opportunity for improvisation in their dance is very special. Children are so uninhibited and their innate love of music and dance is an amazing quality."

When Gandini took over the Australian operation in 2004, Kindy Dance Time was operating out of two locations. Now more than 850 students attend over 80 classes a week in Western Australia alone, where there are long waiting lists. There is also a strong demand from other states; Gandini is using a company-owned model to establish a strong brand presence in key locations to provide future franchisees with a firm foundation for success.

"Our goal is to grow the brand in a

rapid, yet sustainable manner, to reduce waiting lists and to make the most of increasing demand for Kindy Dance Time," she says. "We aim to become a nationally-recognised leader."

MagiKats

MagiKats was designed by a team of UK educators who discovered that the most common approach to tuition – focusing on either core skills or school work – was less effective than a combination of the two. Children following the MagiKats program receive help with challenging areas of the school curriculum at a tuition centre and also complete homework assignments designed to develop core skills and target their weak areas. In the process, they are encouraged to think logically and to develop study skills that can be applied across the maths and English curriculum.

"We know that our approach of using multi-sensory learning techniques helps the student retain knowledge," says Jenine