

**How My Small Wonders Childcare and Development Center partnered with Wacky World Studios to elevate and enrich their learning environments and ultimately grow the brand.**



CASE STUDY



# my small wonders

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## Introduction

Since its humble beginnings in 2008, My Small Wonders Childcare and Development Center has grown into a **well-respected leader in the child development field**. Its story, though, almost came to a screeching halt in 2011. On the **brink of bankruptcy**, Scott and Tammy Werner purchased My Small Wonders with a vision and a passion to transform it into one of the nation's premier child development centers providing excellence in the care and development of children.

Ten years later, the Werners had achieved their goal. Their reputation for excellence captured the attention of Child Development Schools, a **leading provider of early education with over 260 centers across 11 states**. CDS acquired My Small Wonders in 2021, and the brand has since grown to include multiple locations in Texas and Oklahoma and expansion continues.



## Challenge

Operating at **60% capacity and in debt seven figures**, My Small Wonders was on the verge of closure. Under new ownership, My Small Wonders needed to make bold transformational changes that would:

- Boost **enrollment**,
- Improve learning **outcomes**,
- Build brand **loyalty**,
- And sustain **higher tuition** rates.

## Solution

Leaning into the highly successful operational methodologies of industry bestsellers “The Experience Economy” and “Inside the Magic Kingdom,” My Small Wonders focused on creating a transformative child-centered culture. The multi-pronged approach included a **significant investment** to reimagine the learning environment. Wacky World Studios was engaged to transform the **8,000-square-foot** center into an **immersive learning experience** creating classrooms and hallways that felt like a giant storybook including:

- Immersive **wallcoverings**
- Six **age-group themes**
- Seek-and-find **curriculum integration**
- **Branded art** integration—walls, printed curriculum, digital marketing



“ Having worked with Wacky World Studios in the past, we were confident they were the right partner to help us create an environment that captured the hearts and imagination of the children, creating a sensory experience that would help us achieve our learning objectives and ultimately our revenue goals. ”

Scott Werner, President 2011-2020

## Renovation Outcomes

In less than one year from reopening in June of 2012, My Small Wonders was:

- Operating at full **capacity**
- Maintaining a healthy **waitlist** (including pre-expectant families)
- **Expanding** (2014) to double the capacity
- Sustaining annual **tuition increases**
- **Outperforming** the competition in kindergarten-readiness metrics

The overwhelming success ultimately culminated in attracting the attention of one of the nation's leading childcare providers acquiring My Small Wonders in 2021.

## Visual Environment Statistics

The primary mode of learning for young children is sensory with sight the strongest. Research proves:

- **1/3 of the cerebral cortex** (brain's gray matter) is dedicated to vision.<sup>1</sup>
- **Warm bold colors** increase attention, participation, and knowledge acquisition.<sup>2</sup>
- **Pictorial learning** enhances cognitive processing and memory development.<sup>2</sup>
- **Visual literacy** builds writing and critical thinking skills.<sup>3</sup>
- **Integration of color** improves readership by 40%, reading comprehension by 73% and overall learning by 55-78%.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>1</sup>Bryson, Bill. (2019, October 15). The Body: A Guide for Occupants. Random House.

<sup>2</sup>Chang, Bo; Xu, Renmei; and Watt, Tiffany (2018). "The Impact of Colors on Learning," Adult Education Research Conference. <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2018/papers/30>

<sup>3</sup>Minor, Dianna (2021, January). Visual Literacy is Critical for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners. National Council of English Teachers. <https://ncte.org/blog/2021/01/visual-literacy-critical-21st-centurylearners/#:~:text=Students%20skilled%20in%20visual%20literacy,ideas%20while%20expressing%20their%20own>

<sup>4</sup>Hughes, Melissa (2017, July) The Neuroscience of Color. VariQuest. <https://info.variquest.com/blog/the-neuroscience-of-color>

## Conclusion

- ① Child-centered design drives financial and academic success.
- ② Color usage is imperative to early childhood development.
- ③ Visual stimulation improves learning outcomes.
- ④ Fostering belonging through visually identifiable grade-level “tribes” creates a more inclusive experience.
- ⑤ Return on investment in classroom design is substantial.



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