



Distributing the Marketing Materials to Launch the Campaign

What you'll learn...

In Part 4, read how this process came to life with the parent-outreach campaign for BrightStars, Rhode Island's QRIS.

Recap

In Part 1 of this series, we discussed how to create a communications framework for reaching out to parents.

In Part 2, we reviewed strategy and tactics, as well as the kinds of marketing materials needed to reach each audience.

In Part 3, we'll share a case study—the parent campaign developed for BrightStars, Rhode Island's quality rating and improvement system.

In Part 4, learn how BrightStars used this process to connect with multiple audiences in their efforts to reach parents and families of young children in Rhode Island.

The final installment of this series wraps up the BrightStars experience by describing how they used custom marketing materials in launching their parent outreach campaign for Rhode Island's quality rating and improvement system.

Connecting with Audiences

As we clarified in [Part 1 of this series](#), not all parent outreach directly targets the parent audience. Rather, there are three audiences to consider in our efforts to reach parents:

- 1 Providers
- 2 Parents themselves
- 3 Family Influencers (including healthcare groups, state service agencies, and community-based organizations)

Providers

By this time in the process, the parent-outreach campaign for BrightStars had already connected with programs statewide. In Rhode Island, enrollment was mandated, so participation was high and providers had a sound understanding of the quality rating and improvement system. In addition, they had already begun using customized marketing materials to help parents understand what BrightStars was, and to demonstrate their program's commitment to quality care.

The BrightStars team reports that response to both the materials and the messages has been overwhelmingly positive: "The providers have been very receptive, and glad to have the marketing materials which benefit them by promoting their program."

Parents

We knew that mass-marketing was not the most effective way to reach parents with children aged 0-5. Tactics like billboards and bus-shelter ads are costly and live for only a short time, and the message isn't relevant for many who will see them.

Knowing that there was no simple, cost-effective way to connect directly with large numbers of parents of young children, we instead used a targeted strategy to educate parents about Rhode Island's QRIS and make them aware of BrightStars's two key messages: "Find quality rated early care and education" and "The brightest tomorrow begins today."

This targeted strategy involved connecting with smaller groups of parents in ways that made sense. Specifically, the team met with parents at places like farmer's markets, health fairs, and other public events with large audiences where they could have short personal conversations with parents and families of young children.

Family Influencers

Yet, an even more important aspect of our parent outreach work focused on family influencers—educating them about QRIS and building awareness about the BrightStars system in particular. We made this strategic decision for several reasons:

- By definition, **family influencers meet with parents and families of young children every day**—as part of their regular work—and they're in a position to advocate on behalf of the QRIS.
- In addition, **their recommendations have weight with parents**. Seen as experts in some aspect of child care or child development, they all have the voice of authority and their referral carries an implied endorsement.
- **These groups likely have little to no understanding** of a quality rating and improvement system, so it's critical that they be informed about the system and feel comfortable directing parents to the QRIS as a way to find quality child care.

Using our detailed list of the several dozen healthcare groups, state service agencies, and community-based organizations that engage with parents and families of young children (see [Part 2 of this series](#) for more information), we identified ways to educate these groups and build brand awareness for the BrightStars quality rating and improvement system.

Communicating with Family Influencers

Given the complexity of this material and the importance of the work, the team realized that a simple mailing wouldn't work for the family influencer audience. Such a tactic might help with brand awareness, but inanimate marketing materials don't have the same impact as a personal experience with the information.

To that end—and armed with a collection of marketing materials—the BrightStars team began reaching out to family influencers. This effort took several forms:

- To reach larger numbers of people more cost-effectively, BrightStars delivered a series of **presentations** to educate and

build awareness. Rather than create their own training sessions for this work, BrightStars built on partnerships they already had with groups like the Department of Education, statewide coalition of YMCAs, home-visiting agencies—negotiating time slots to present to select groups as part of the agenda at scheduled assemblies. At these presentations, influencers received a starter kit of marketing materials, and were advised to contact BrightStars directly for more parent-facing materials when needed.

- In some cases—with healthcare providers, for instance—presentations to larger groups weren't possible. **Phone calls** were another tactic used for outreach to some family influencers. With organizations like state WIC agencies, it was easy to identify the correct contact person and have a meaningful conversation. The BrightStars team then mailed packages of parent-facing marketing materials which those influencers could disseminate to clients as needed.
- In some situations, it was more difficult to find the best person to connect with—for instance, healthcare offices. In those cases, the BrightStars team has conducted **walk-in visits** to identify a suitable contact person, share the news about the quality rating and improvement system, and secure a commitment to display materials. Response from doctors' offices has been positive to such visits, and the team continues to deliver information in this manner for select audiences where appropriate.

Summary

In this four-part series, you've seen how:

- Creating the framework for your campaign to reach parents and families of young children means connecting with, and educating, a variety of audiences.
- An assortment of marketing materials can empower advocates to educate parents and families about the value and benefits of your state's quality rating and improvement system.
- This process comes to life through the example of Rhode Island's QRIS, BrightStars, as they created campaign materials and launched their direct-outreach campaign for parents and families of young children.

By developing a comprehensive communications plan, building a well-thought-out strategy, and delivering a consistent message of education and brand awareness, BrightStars saturated the market with their messaging within just six months, and achieved significant success in their quality rating and improvement system.

About Orange Square

Orange Square is dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families by combining your expertise in QRIS with our expertise in marketing communications and the QRIS National Learning Network.

Together with you, we work to improve the quality of early care and education by building public awareness and engagement.



Learn more about our services and knowledge on QRIS marketing communications at orangesquare.com/QRIS



Join our LinkedIn group dedicated to QRIS marketing and communications at linkedin.com/groups/8540612



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