



More than Pencils, More than Books

by Carolyn Heinze

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If one of a church's main goals is to serve the community, then it makes sense for them to want to care for their communities' children.

Church daycares and schools offer a valuable service to both parents and kids—if done right. Opening one of these facilities, however, isn't just a matter of making or building the appropriate amount of space: There are also the associated logistics to consider.

Mike Bailey, director of Portland, Ore.-based Ecos, a consulting firm that provides expertise on environmental sustainability, notes that the first step in daycare or school facility planning should involve a clear definition of the church's goals. "A lot of facilities start a daycare or a pre-school without a plan of how they want it to be laid out," he observes. "They end up spending a lot of extra money because the growth is incremental, and it's not planned." These goals should be driven by the needs of the congregation, and the practical elements of how the facility should be laid out can grow from there. "What happens, however, is that many facilities try something temporarily, and it doesn't really work. They then find it really difficult to get it right, or at least it takes a lot longer to do so."

John Conlon, owner of the Web-based enterprise facilities management systems developer Facility Tree in Carol Stream, Ill., emphasizes that before even launching into a daycare or school project, churches need to have a good look at the books. "If the church is going to expand into a daycare or school, they have to be careful not to underestimate the operational costs involved," he says. Otherwise, they run the risk of getting everything up and running, only to discover that they can't sustain

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everything up and running, only to discover that they can't sustain the ongoing expenses involved.

Thinking it through

There is also the very real issue of space. Let's take the example of a church-run daycare that serves lunches on a daily basis. What happens if one day there's a funeral, and the room that's normally used for lunchtime is also the one that's meant for functions such as funeral lunches? "These are the kinds of things that you need to think about, because people get used to having things a certain way," Conlon says.

This means that traffic flow-how the children will move from, say, recess, to the various activities they're engaged in from day-to-day-should be thought out ahead of time. There must also be a contingency plan in place for those unexpected factors, such as when inclement weather forces the facility to hold recess indoors.

Once you have expanded from being simply a church to a full-fledged school or daycare, your facility is subject to state regulations. In Illinois, Conlon notes, these standards are set out by the Department of Children and Family Services. "You are no longer babysitting; now, you have all of those requirements that are set out by the state," he explains. "It gets very involved when you expand into a school, where you are taking care of children all day long." These regulations can apply to every manner of how the facility is run, from building codes to how far restrooms should be located from certain classrooms.

While many churches are able to get away with cleaning schedules comprised of three or four days per week, daycares and schools require that certain custodial tasks be carried out on a daily basis. "That means labor, which means it's going to cost you more money," Conlon says. And not just any labor-custodial staff must be properly trained to abide by the compliance requirements as defined by the law. "When there are children in your building, you must have a custodian on hand, so if before you had someone come in on a periodic basis only, that's not going to work now. You need someone there at all times."

In fact, the addition of a daycare or school transforms the church into a facility that is running all day every day-something that not all houses of worship are accustomed to. "It's a big change from going from Sunday school, where the site isn't really used the rest of the time, save for a couple of youth groups," Bailey concedes. Aside from accounting for all of the additional tasks associated with things like daily food preparation, churches must assume the costs involved in heating, cooling and lighting the facility for extended periods of time. They must also be prepared to react instantly when something goes wrong.

In closing, Bailey says, "You have to take into account the custodial and maintenance staff required to respond to these issues. If the heat goes out on a Monday and there is no school, you have all week to fix it. However, if you have a pre-school, you don't have that luxury-you must respond right away."

SIDEBAR

Facility Design Can Lead To Enhanced Child Safety

While most facilities will invest in some kind of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system to boost security, there are a number

will end up on the floor. Flooring systems for daycares and schools, then, should be built to withstand all of this, and they should also be easy to clean. Stipes Elementary School, Irving, Texas. (Photo courtesy of Mondo Flooring.)



Video projectors are often ideal in schools, where they can be moved from room to room, according to Michael Bridwell, marketing communications manager with Kennesaw, Ga.'s Digital Projection, a video projector manufacturer that serves churches. (Photo courtesy of Da-Lite.)



Chris Selvik, new business development manager with Libertyville, Ill.-based LTR Products LLC, a subsidiary of Liberty Tire Recycling of Pittsburgh, reports that his company offers a rubber mulch product—Pinnacle Rubber Mulch—that's just right for playground safety.



Dallas-based Roemtech LLC's new PlenumAmp PMA-245H, released in July 2010, was designed and approved for above ceiling use. The unit is reportedly ideal for

of low-tech methods to ensure that when on school grounds, the children are safe. Mainly, explains Mike Bailey, director at Ecos in Portland, Ore., this can be achieved by designing a facility-both indoors and outdoors-where everyone is visible at all times.

"They have to make sure that the children are well-monitored, so they must be conscious of sightlines," Bailey says. Facilities should also be laid out so that passersby don't have access to the children when they are on the premises. "Conversely, you don't want to have the potential for kids to be able to hide where the teacher's aid or instructor can't find them," Bailey adds.

Be Mindful of What's Under Foot

Where there are children, there will be spills-and paint and mud and so forth-and gravity being what it is, most of this will end up on the floor. Flooring systems for daycares and schools, then, should be built to withstand all of this, and they should also be easy to clean.

"I recommend a material that doesn't require waxes and coatings to maintain it, because that can be labor-intensive for your cleaning staff," advises Latasha Pittman, director of marketing and communications at Mondo Flooring in Conshohocken, Pa. "You want something that doesn't require an auto-scrubber to clean; you want to be able to use a mop and a bucket of water to clean it." Flooring materials that require the use of toxic cleaning chemicals are also not ideal.

In addition, Pittman counsels churches to choose flooring that is suitable for multi-purpose rooms. "They should look at flooring that is going to allow them to have some flexibility in the use of the space," she says. "With some of the flooring that we offer, you have the ability to use the surface for tables and chairs as well as for sports-type activities."

Finally, Pittman notes that sometimes it pays more to assume a higher up-front cost to install something that is going to last-sometimes, what's inexpensive to purchase may turn out to be expensive to maintain. Be sure to research the life-cycle cost of whatever system you're considering, and always check the details of the warranty.

Projection Planning, Mobility and Safety

Michael Bridwell, marketing communications manager at video projector manufacturer Digital Projection in Kennesaw, Ga., counsels churches to hire a professional integrator to assist them with planning their power grids in order to optimize how electricity is distributed throughout the facility. "You [need] to have your power grid worked out," he emphasizes. "A lot of your power will come into the sanctuary itself because of the higher-lumen projectors, which are fighting the ambient light. Then, you will want the infrastructure to stretch out to the offices to anything that you need as far as cameras go, not only for live simulcast, but for monitoring as well."

Bridwell notes that video projectors, as opposed to flat-panel plasma screens, are often ideal in schools, where one unit can be moved from room to room. "With projectors, you also have mobility. You can have a work-horse projector that-when you have a group of kids [and you want] to present something [to them] at a specific time-you can move it into that room and project the image onto the wall," he explains. "With a projector that has a decent lumen output, you have the flexibility to do what you want."

Safety is another issue, and The Da-Lite Screen Co. in Warsaw, Ind., offers Controlled Screen Return (CSR), a feature designed to not only maintain the fabric of the video screen itself, but also to avoid accidents. "When the screen is let go, it doesn't slam into the case; it has a system that slows it down before it goes into the case and then gently puts the fabric back into the case as it gets closer to the top," explains Blake Brubaker, Da-Lite's vice president of sales. "It eliminates the potential for that screen to slam up into the mechanism and then fall off the wall, hurting somebody."

Keeping Kids Safe With The Bonus Of Environmentally Friendly Materials

above ceiling use. The unit is reportedly ideal for educational environments and provides crisp, clear audio in a compact design.



With churches increasingly using basement spaces for kids' play areas and similar uses, safety is more important than ever. Wellcraft Egress Systems provide escape routes that even children can operate on their own, according to the company.



To help ensure cleanliness and easier clean up for custodial crews, CPR offers Waterless No-Flush urinals and other no-touch products, including dual flush for toilets as well as faucets with sensor-type, no-touch features. The company even offers a no-grasp restroom door handle.

Chris Selvik, new business development manager with Libertyville, Ill.-based LTR Products LLC, a subsidiary of Liberty Tire Recycling of Pittsburgh, reports that his company offers a rubber mulch product-Pinnacle Rubber Mulch-that's just right for playground safety. The product provides "superior playground safety" as a surface used beneath play equipment, Selvik says. Unlike wood mulch, rubber mulch is resistant to wind and water erosion, bug infestation, fading caused by sunlight, and general decomposition.

"At a six-inch depth, [Pinnacle Rubber Mulch] will cushion a child's fall from as high as 16 feet," Selvik says. "It is non-toxic and non-staining-the color will not rub off on children, clothes or pets." In addition, he reports that rubber mulch helps minimize problems with airborne dust and doesn't result in splinters, as wood mulch can.

How does rubber mulch save both money and the environment? The cost savings occurs because the product lasts for a number of years, Selvik says, while rubber mulch is the ideal vehicle to give recycled tires a second, useful life.

LTR Products also offers a playground safety surface system called the Smarte System. The system consists of a four-inch layer of bagged rubber mulch that is covered by a ½-inch porous plastic PVC sheet. "This allows for fantastic wheelchair accessibility, yet still offers excellent fall protection," Selvik says.

Learn more at: www.pinnaclelubbermulch.com.

An Amplifier Fit For School

Dallas-based Roemtech LLC's new PlenumAmp PMA-245H, released in July 2010, was designed and approved for above ceiling use. The unit is reportedly ideal for educational environments and provides crisp, clear audio in a compact design. The plenum-rated PMA-245H amplifier/mixer uses Roemtech's exclusive HummBuster technology to remove random noise that can enter classroom audio systems. (Plenum-rated cable is required for jobs where cable will be run in return air space. In most buildings this area is above drop ceilings or under raised floors. The materials required to pass plenum standards are much more expensive than non-plenum-rated designs. Source: www.genescable.com/FAQ.)

According to Roemtech, a high percentage of laptops emit a buzzing or humming sound when connected to a sound system. The company's new product is reported to be the only amplifier that cleans up that noise nearly every time. As Roemtech CEO and President D. Thomas Emlinger states, "We're excited about this new amplifier because it completely eliminates ground loop hums caused by inadequate electrical grounds and noisy sound cards."

The PlenumAmp PMA-245H has an MSRP of \$220, comes with a 60-watt power supply, and includes a three-year warranty. Learn more at: www.roemtech.com

Egress Window Well Systems Provide Escape

With churches increasingly using basement spaces for kids' play areas and similar uses, safety is more important than ever. Wellcraft Egress Systems provide escape routes that even children can operate on their own, according to the company.

"Egress-style window wells are now required by law for all new home construction," says Jonathan Wierengo, director of marketing for The Tapco Group, maker of Wellcraft Egress Systems. These life-saving systems enable adults and children to escape danger from the basement quickly, easily and reliably, Wierengo reports.

Each Wellcraft Egress System features a built-in stepladder and lightweight well cover. The company reports that a closed well cover can hold up to 500 pounds, so stepping across or playing near one is not a hazard for children. In addition to safety, the systems give rooms a natural ambient light, according to Wellcraft. Window wells are available in nature-inspired sandstone or granite grey and come with a 10-year warranty against rust and decay.

Learn more at: www.wellcraftwells.com or www.thetapcogroup.com

The Health-Safety, Water-Saving Benefits Of No-Touch Solutions

Worship Facilities Magazine interviewed Vince Newton, owner of Commercial Restroom Products (CRP) in Westerville, Ohio, to learn more about his company's Waterless No-Flush urinals and other no-touch products, and why they're viable options for church schools and daycares. As Newton reports, "Odor, poor cleanliness and empty paper dispensers are among the most common complaints from the public restroom visitor. CRP offers a variety of products that will help reduce these complaints. In the case of a new visitor to a church or [church school], their first and lasting impression may be the result of a stop at the restroom."

To help ensure cleanliness and easier clean up for custodial crews, CPR also offers automatic sensor-type valves, including dual flush for toilets as well as faucets with sensor-type, no-touch features. The company even offers a no-grasp restroom door handle. Sensitive to the needs and requests from churches and schools for environmentally friendly products, the company offers organic cleaning alternatives and solutions as well. "An additional benefit associated with many of [our] products is the cost savings of water/sewer and the reduction of janitorial and custodial man hours," Newton says.

Find out more at: www.commercialrestroomproducts.com

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