Footprint - Kellie Claiden-Smithies wins **Influential Women in Business Award 2024**

Running a business has always been difficult but it's fair to say for women in the world of business it's an even more complex challenge. In this edition of the magazine we are celebrating the achievements of the women that have broken through those barriers and the glass ceiling they are often faced with to make an impact in the industries they work in. Celebrating women in business is not just a recognition of individual accomplishments, but a collective acknowledgment of the invaluable contributions women make to the business world.

One woman that has really made her mark over the years is the founder and owner of the award winning Footprints Preschool, Kellie Claiden-Smithies. We are delighted to announce that Kellie is the latest winner of one of our 2024 Influential Women in Business Awards. The award is well deserved and further cements her reputation as an absolute master of her craft. The award will come as no surprise to anybody that knows Kellie or is familiar with Footprints Preschool and in this edition of the magazine we will try to give you an insight into the work that she does and the success that she has enjoyed.

> **Kellie is an experienced professional whose journey in childcare started when she began working in a nursery after leaving school. Whilst working she also attended college to help her gain the qualifications and skills required to thrive in a childcare setting. Kellie is somebody that always strives to improve so when she became qualified she went on to complete two further degrees to enhance her knowledge within the sector. She did through day release while continuing to work full time. It was whilst doing her second degree she first decided that opening her own nursery was the career path she would like to pursue so she began looking for premises and the rest as they say is history.**

Today Footprints is an award winning nursery with an impeccable Ofsted report that really prides itself on being a flexible childcare setting, recognising the diverse needs of modern families. The facility offers a range of services tailored to accommodate the unique schedules of parents, including full-day care and part-time options available. Footprints Preschool is more than just a childcare setting, it's a place where children are encouraged to explore, learn, and grow in a warm and nurturing environment.

Of course it's not all been plain sailing and there have been some very significant challenges like the Covid pandemic but they have gone from strength to strength opening a second setting this year and have plans for further expansion in the years ahead. After Covid hit their enquiries and enrolments went through the roof and they are now taking sign ups for 2026/2027 with a waiting list. What makes Kellie's achievements even more impressive is she has done it all whilst having to balance being a mother to four children and continuing to work full time and lead very much from the front.

What Kellie has achieved is a reminder that anything can be achieved with the right mindset, knowledge and a determination to always provide a great service. Kellie embodies the spirit and actions of a modern female business leader. The fact that she has been able to work so effectively over so many years with such great success is something that is very rare and says a great deal about her unique skill set. She's showing no signs of slowing down anytime soon and it's clear that there are many chapters yet to be written in the Kellie Claiden-Smithies story.



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