

## Their Vision Keeps Kids' In Site Online

By Christine Gordon

You're a hard working parent, half of a hard working, two income couple. How much would you pay to know that your two-year-old is safe and happy at that day care center where you leave her every morning? If you are a parent that comfort is priceless, but Silicon Alley start-up ParentWatch wants to offer it to you for \$25 a month.

That's the subscription fee ParentWatch charges parents to access over the Net live video of their children in their day care centers all day. Although the ParentWatch business plan calls for giving parents access to all kind of parenting content, and selling marketing and e-commerce opportunities to advertisers who want to reach a captive audience of enthralled parents, clearly the company's strongest sales pitch is to time-stressed parents stuck in offices far from their children all day.

ParentWatch is just one of several competitors pushing into the already crowded space of selling a sense of security to parents. But it's one of the best funded, having recently raised \$10 million in second round financing led by Arcadia Partners and other private investors.

But for ParentWatch founder and CEO Adam Aronson, ParentWatch is not a security business. "Our goal is to empower parents and centers," said Aronson. "It's a service for families, not a security venue. It gives us a non-push way to approach a center, offer a Q & A with parents and staff and inform centers of other opportunities through our service. It's not a security service."

Still, if you were a parent wouldn't you feel more secure and less guilty if you could watch your child finger painting?

Founded in 1998, ParentWatch was not the first player in the space. And these days ParentWatch is duking it out in a competitive marketplace with the likes of Washington State-based WatchMeGrow.com and Atlanta's KinderCam.com, and several others. All the players have similar plans--to capture the space by offering a Web cam service as well as a host of other services that include e-commerce opportunities for centers and parents, software for centers to order through select vendors partners, and state-wide online certification programs.

It's basically an online content business where the content is a killer app for parents--their kids.

Most parents love the ability to hit refresh on their computer screens and watch their children learn and play without worry that their kids are being neglected or bullied. Front desk computers in daycare centers reassure them that after they leave the classroom their recent drop-offs acclimate just fine. And for its part, centers are drawn to the lure of making parents feel an online attachment to their children while reducing expenses through e-commerce deals and discounts initiated by online nannies who double as B2B hook-ups.