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SMACNA and SMART help members find quality childcare during hard-to-fill hours with Tootris

Childcare is one of the biggest challenges working parents face. As a young dad, Dave Gauthier, business manager for Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation (SMART) Local 206 in San Diego, struggled to take care of his family.

“When my twin boys were young, our childcare facility opened at 6 am, and I had to be in the shop at 6:30,” he says. “We would be there at the doorstep waiting for it to open, and I had to jump in my truck and do everything I could to get to the shop on time.”

Linda Jennings, Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors’ Association (SMACNA) Executive Director of Innovation, Integration, and Learning and former SMACNA executive director in San Diego, wanted to leave her children with family while she worked, but she didn’t have that option. “I was an older mom,” she says, “and my parents were not capable of helping me with my kids because they were in their 80s. A lot of us don’t have family that can help with the kids.”

Gauthier and Jennings teamed up to provide help through Tootris, a new service that locates quality childcare and helps parents solve the most complex daycare problems. “With Tootris, you can put in your zip code and use filters like peanut allergies or a summer program for an active teen,” says Gauthier. “It’ll find all the providers in your area, and Tootris has already negotiated the best deal the facility will give.”

This agreement is invaluable for San Diego SMART members like Steven Joyce. “I was searching for childcare because I had a two-year-old and a newborn,” he says. “It was a lot of calling around and finding out their facility was full and didn’t have anything available.”

He signed up for Tootris through SMART Local 206 and quickly discovered a great fit just 2 ½ miles from home. “Tootris does the footwork for you, and they don’t find just anyone. They found people in the top tier of daycares in San Diego.” Joyce has peace of mind, knowing that his children are in a safe, secure space while he works.

Parents can use Tootris to book care up to 12 months in advance, but it also helps any time an unexpected project comes up. “Say my schedule just got changed next for the next three weeks,” Gauthier says. “I’m working nights, and I need childcare that will take my kids at night. You open the app, put in the filters, put in the hours, and it finds you providers in the area.”

Tootris has over 200,000 providers across the United States, with before and after school care, full-time and part-time childcare, daycares, and in-home licensed providers as well as babysitters, nannies, special education help, and other wraparound services. “We want to make sure the benefit evolves and grows as children are naturally progressing,” says Tootris representative Eric Cutler. “Tootris does not promote one type of service or brand but has the entire selection, so parents have the freedom to pick the type of care they need when they need it. Tootris keeps parents on the job by solving their top challenge.”

The International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) and the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors’ National Association (SMACNA) have a labor management partnership that is more than 75 years old. The goal of these Partners in Progress is to maintain an effective cooperative effort that demonstrates their expertise in the heating ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC), architectural metal, and industrial sheet metal markets. For additional information, visit pinp.org.