

Retailers go the extra mile to attract shoppers

Family-friendly malls see more business

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SINGAPORE — More retailers here are adopting family-friendly practices to stay competitive.

Features such as family car parks, spacious nursery rooms and baby pram rentals are giving some shopping centres an extra edge.

According to the Singapore Retailers Association (SRA), about seven in 10 businesses with such features have seen sales increase by 30 to 50 per cent.

They say about 30 per cent of families with young children or the elderly are ready to switch to places with such facilities.

SRA executive director Lau Chuen Wei said: "If more establishments adopt family-friendly practices, they'll be in a better position.

"The more time the person is able to spend comfortably within an establishment, the

likelihood is that they're going to spend more money there."

Centrepoint is one mall, for instance, that is making fathers more comfortable — by having diaper-changing stations in male restrooms too.

The elderly are also starting to be served.

City Square mall, for instance, has ramps, wider walkways and even magnifying glasses at information kiosks.

However, more can still be done.

Ms Lau said: "There should be that extra effort put in, especially as we're looking at Singapore being an ageing population."

The Businesses for Families Council hopes to get more shopping centres on board.

To get businesses to do just that, it is giving out awards for the first time, in March, to those with exemplary family-friendly measures.