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Dupree will conduct 30-minute initial consultations with clients and then make visits to deliver fresh diapers and retrieve dirty ones for washing. She'll then relay the dirty diapers to Temple who will wash them from her home in Rockland in a commercial washer with five exchanges of water reaching temperatures of up to 150 degrees.

Temple concocted the idea for starting Buzzie Bee as a parent in Connecticut, desiring a cloth diaper service as an alternative to disposable diapers. "I've always been very environmentally focused," Temple said. "It's part of who I am."

When she found the diaper service in her area didn't deliver to her town, Temple learned to cloth diaper herself. The Buzzie Bee business followed after she and her husband moved to Maine to raise their children and found a warmer business climate here.

"People in Maine think nothing of people like us starting a business," she said, referring to herself and Dupree. "In Connecticut, you needed a lot more capital."

Dupree and Temple are trying to freshen the stigma of cloth diapers, which parents of past generations have associated with hours of soaking and safety pins. "(Cloth diapers) really have a bad reputation," Temple said.

With Velcro, snaps and extra padding, or doublers, for naps and bedtime, it's easier today, they said. And with a diaper service like Buzzie Bee that can do all the laundering, delivering and setup, using cloth can be even easier than disposables.

"Really, parents don't have to lift a finger besides changing their baby and, hopefully, parents are doing that anyway," Temple said.

Because children in cloth diapers often potty train earlier, Temple estimates the cost of her diaper service to be comparable to disposable diapers.

Cost per week range from \$25 for the basic diaper laundering service to \$37 for diapers, diaper covers, wipes and doublers after a one-time materials startup cost, ranging from \$30 to \$45.

Parents also save time in trips to the store, potential diaper rash on their child and filling landfills with hundreds of disposable plastic diapers, which aren't designed to handle human waste, Temple said. Cloth diaper waste, on the other hand, enters the sewer treatment system, and the diapers themselves are reused by one family and then resurrected for another life as utility rags.

So far, Buzzie Bees has received inquiries, but no new clients from their expansion area, but Temple and Dupree remain hopeful they can find 20 new clients in the area, about the same number Temple serves in Rockland.

When Brandi Maxwell of Thomaston looked for a cloth diapering service, she turned to Buzzie Bee, which was the only service in her area.

She had seen an advertisement at a doctor's appointment,

which triggered her interest in using cloth diapers. "Then I started just going online and doing some research between cloth diapers and regular diapers," she said.

Now, she's been using Buzzie Bee for 19 months. "We use cloth diapers for my daughter because we felt like it was a better alternative for the environment," she said. "Another reason we use the cloth diapers is we had read that potty training can go a lot easier."

Some area parents have found other cloth diaper services to serve the area before deciding to deal with the diapers on their own. Before she stopped the service to cut costs, Sarah Hedberg of Brunswick used Portland-based Field O' Flowers, which arranged a drop off point in Brunswick for several parents.

While she won't likely return to using a service now that she's used to washing her own diapers, Hedberg said diaper services are helpful for new users of cloth diapers, who are faced with so many choices about materials and products. "I think it was a great incentive to help me start," she said.

Like Dupree and Temple, Hedberg turned to cloth diapers for environmental reasons. "It's crazy to put 500 diapers a year into a landfill," she said. Besides that, her son has never got a diaper rash, she said.

"I'm in a mom's group where almost every mother does cloth diapers," she said.

With continuously changing clientele, Buzzie Bee diaper service will depend primarily on word of mouth advertising among groups like Hedberg's to keep its business stable.

"We really have to prove to the community that we're going to stick around," Temple said.



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