

AI Statement

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Seedlings Play Café is going to be a development-focused early years play space based in Swansea, designed for children aged 0–5 and their parents or carers. There will include a gated area for children aged 0-18 months. We will be able to provide a calm, safe and nurturing environment where children learn through purposeful play while adults relax, connect and recharge.

Unlike traditional soft play centres or structured baby classes, Seedling's will offer:

- ✓ Development-led play zones
- ✓ Safe, enclosed baby area
- ✓ Flexible drop-in sessions
- ✓ Comfortable café seating
- ✓ Calm, sensory-focused environment
- ✓ Professional early years leadership

We bridge the gap between childcare, leisure and parent support. The focus on 0–5 years aligns with early childhood development stages and Welsh early years priorities, particularly around school readiness, communication skills, and social development (Department for Education, no date).

Seedlings Play Café is innovative because it introduces a hybrid model that integrates early childhood development principles within a community café setting, addressing a clear gap in Swansea's early years provision. Unlike traditional soft play centres that prioritise entertainment, or structured classes that limit flexibility, Seedlings combines development-led play, professional early years expertise, and informal parent support within an accessible drop-in environment. This model promotes cognitive, social, emotional and physical development while simultaneously reducing parental isolation, recognising the interconnected nature of child and family wellbeing. By embedding Level 5 practitioner knowledge into a commercially sustainable dual-income structure, Seedlings moves beyond conventional leisure provision and positions itself as a socially responsive, community-

focused early years innovation aligned with current Welsh priorities around early intervention and holistic child development.

Seedlings Play Café is designed around the principle that the first five years of life are critical for brain development, emotional regulation, language acquisition, and social skills (First Things First, 2018). The environment, resources and structure of the café intentionally promote holistic development across all key early year's areas. Seedlings Play Café offers significant benefits for children, parents and the wider community, all of which directly support early years development. The primary benefit is the provision of a safe, development-led play environment specifically designed for children aged 0–5. During the first five years, neural connections in the brain form rapidly, meaning high-quality play experiences are crucial. By offering sensory exploration, role play, construction activities and movement opportunities, Seedlings promotes cognitive development, problem-solving skills and early mathematical understanding.

A benefit is the intentional focus on communication and language development. The café encourages parent–child interaction through shared play spaces, story areas and imaginative role play. Research consistently highlights that language-rich environments in early childhood strengthen vocabulary, listening skills and social communication, which are foundational for school readiness.

Seedlings will also support social and emotional development. The calm, structured layout allows children to engage in parallel and cooperative play, supporting sharing, turn-taking and emotional regulation. At the same time, the space reduces overstimulation often found in large soft play centres, helping children feel secure and confident.

An additional benefit is the positive impact on parental wellbeing. By creating a welcoming community hub, Seedlings reduces social isolation and encourages peer support networks. Strong parental wellbeing is closely linked to secure attachment, which significantly influences children's emotional security and long-term developmental outcomes.

Finally, the flexible drop-in model increases accessibility, allowing families to engage with early developmental experiences without the commitment of formal childcare or fixed

classes. This promotes inclusion and early intervention, aligning with Welsh priorities around supporting children during the critical early years period.

Cognitive Development - Children develop thinking skills through exploration, repetition and problem-solving (PBF, no date). Seedlings support cognitive development by providing:

- Cause-and-effect toys
- Open-ended resources (blocks, loose parts, role play materials)
- Sensory exploration activities
- Construction and problem-solving areas

These activities encourage curiosity, memory building, reasoning skills and early mathematical thinking.

Communication and Language - Early language development is strongly influenced by interaction and shared experiences (Thrive at Five, 2026). Seedlings promote communication by:

- Providing story corners and book areas
- Encouraging role play scenarios (shop, home corner, café play)

The relaxed environment allows adults to engage meaningfully with their children, strengthening vocabulary, turn-taking and listening skills.

Social and Emotional Development - Secure relationships and positive peer interactions are fundamental in early childhood (Department for Education, 2025). The café environment supports this by:

- Encouraging sharing and negotiation
- Offering opportunities for parallel and cooperative play
- Providing a calm, non-overstimulating space
- Supporting parent wellbeing and reducing isolation

When parents feel supported, children experience more secure attachments and emotional regulation.

Physical Development - Both fine and gross motor skills are supported through purposeful play (Department for Education, 2025). Seedlings will include:

- Climbing and movement areas
- Mark making and creative stations
- Push and pull toys
- Sensory materials for grasping and manipulation

These activities strengthen coordination, balance and muscle control, which are essential for later writing and self-care skills.

Seedlings support early foundations needed for school by promoting:

- Independence
- Confidence
- Routine familiarity
- Social interaction
- Early literacy and numeracy concepts

Children build the core skills required to transition smoothly into nursery and reception settings.

The café environment aligns with Welsh early years priorities, including:

- Learning through play
- Holistic child development
- Parent partnership
- Early intervention and prevention

By offering accessible, informal developmental opportunities, Seedlings complements statutory early years provision without replacing formal childcare (Welsh Government, 2024). Early development does not happen in isolation. Parental wellbeing directly impacts child outcomes (Social Mobility Commission, 2022).

Seedlings support families by:

- Reducing social isolation
- Creating peer support networks
- Providing informal developmental guidance
- Offering a safe community space

When parents feel confident and connected, children thrive.

Seedlings Play Café complements these priorities by providing accessible early years support in a relaxed community setting.

Swansea has been identified as a suitable location for Seedlings Play Café due to a clear gap within its current early years provision. Market research indicates that while there are several large soft play centres available, these environments are often overstimulating and not specifically designed to meet the developmental needs of babies and very young children. In addition, structured baby and toddler classes operate at fixed times with limited flexibility, which can create barriers for families seeking more adaptable attendance options. Community groups are present but frequently have limited resources and short session durations, restricting the depth of developmental engagement available. Standard cafés, although socially accessible, are not designed to provide safe, enclosed play spaces for young children. Consequently, there is limited provision in Swansea that offers a calm, development-focused environment with flexible, drop-in access for families with children aged 0–5. Furthermore, Welsh local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare provision, and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments consistently highlight shortages in under-2 provision, a need for more flexible early year's services, concerns around parental social isolation, and a growing demand for informal support environments. Seedlings Play Café directly responds to these identified gaps by combining developmental play opportunities with community-based parent support in an accessible and flexible setting.

LC2 is one of the local competitors that I can find like my business. It has a play area that is based on play and is not focused on age specific development (LC2, no date). Playzone provides a large play experience with clear pricing and session structure but remains on physical activity rather than developmental (Playzone, 2020). Brodie's funhouse offers

flexible informal play and events but doesn't give transparent pricing and doesn't offer developmental framing (Brodie's Funhouse, no date). The comparison of places highlights the gap in Swansea for a play space that is both developmentally focused and flexible, which is what Seedlings Play Cafe aims to deliver. After observations these places seem to be too loud, too big and very overstimulating for babies. They focus on a child releasing energy rather than helping with development. Having a place so big causes more stress when supervising a child and less socialisation for parents and carers. They are all priced between £0 - £7. I feel that my price point of £6 and £5 for siblings is an affordable price for families.

Below is a cash flow I have created to look at how Seedling's Play Cafe will look financially:

	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4
Income (money coming in)*				
Sales	40,000	50,000	55,000	65,000
Personal Investment	10,000	0	0	0
TOTAL INCOME	50,000	50,000	55,000	65,000
Costs (money going out)*				
Wages	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Rent	13,200	13,200	13,200	13,000
Initial equipment	2,500	0	0	0
Electricity	5,040	5,040	5,040	5,040
TOTAL COSTS	45,740	43,240	43,240	43,240
NET CASHFLOW*	4,260	6,760	11,760	21,760
GROSS Cashflow	50,000	50,000	55,000	65,000
Opening Balance*	0	4,260	11,020	22,760
Closing Balance*	4,260	11,020	22,760	44,520

The cash flow forecast for Seedlings Play Café demonstrates the financial viability of the business by projecting income and expenditure over the first year of operation. Income is generated through a dual-revenue model, with £6 charged per child for play sessions and £3 per drink from the café, providing a stable and diversified income stream. Expenditure includes essential fixed costs, such as £1,100 monthly rent, and staffing costs for the owner and one additional staff member, both earning the minimum wage in Wales (Welsh Government, 2024). Variable costs include consumables and drink supplies. The forecast indicates that, with steady attendance, the café can maintain positive cash flow while remaining affordable for families, supporting both sustainability and accessibility. This financial planning underpins the café's capacity to deliver developmentally focused play and

parent support, ensuring that operational costs do not compromise the quality of early years provision.

Seedlings Play Café is directly rooted in early years principles and provides clear developmental benefits across all key areas of early childhood development. The early years (0–5) represent a critical period of rapid brain growth, with experiences during this time shaping cognitive ability, emotional regulation, language acquisition and social competence. Seedlings are intentionally designed to support these developmental processes through purposeful, play-based experiences. Firstly, the café promotes cognitive development by offering open-ended resources such as construction materials, role play equipment and sensory activities. These encourage problem-solving, curiosity, memory formation and early mathematical thinking. Research shows that play-based exploration strengthens neural pathways linked to executive functioning and critical thinking skills, which are foundational for later learning (BBC, no date). Secondly, Seedlings strongly supports communication and language development. The layout encourages parent–child interaction through shared play spaces and story areas. Role play stations stimulate imaginative dialogue, vocabulary development and narrative skills. Frequent conversational exchanges in early childhood are closely linked to improved literacy outcomes and school readiness (Birth to 5 Matters, no date).

In terms of social and emotional development, the café provides opportunities for parallel and cooperative play, enabling children to practise sharing, turn-taking and empathy. The calm, structured environment helps children regulate emotions and build confidence, particularly those who may find large, overstimulating soft play centres overwhelming. Secure attachments are reinforced through close adult supervision and interaction, supporting emotional resilience (Children’s Lifetime, no date). Seedlings will also enhance physical development. Gross motor skills are developed through climbing and movement zones, while fine motor skills are strengthened through sensory play, mark-making and manipulation of small objects. These physical foundations are essential for later writing skills, coordination and independence (Early Movers, no date). Importantly, the business model recognises that early year's development does not occur in isolation. By reducing parental isolation and fostering peer support networks, Seedlings strengthens family wellbeing, which is strongly associated with positive child outcomes. When parents feel

supported and confident, children benefit from more responsive caregiving and enriched home learning environments (Zero to Three, 2025).

Seedlings Play Café aligns with contemporary early years practice by prioritising play based learning, this is recognised as central to young children's development (St Martin's School, 2025). According to Crittenden and Gray (2026) having limited play opportunities can have a long-term impact on cognitive development and mental health. Play is widely accepted by practitioners as the foundation for cognitive, social, emotional and language growth (Care Learning, 2024). By differentiating zones for babies, toddlers and preschoolers, Seedlings mirrors approach used in early years settings where experiences are scaffolded to support age-appropriate development.

Additionally, the café's emphasis on adult-child interaction reflects practice frameworks that stress responsive, relational caregiving as essential for secure attachment and developmental outcomes. One of the frameworks linked to the cafe would be the Curriculum for Wales (Curriculum for Wales, 2024). Although this is designed for formal education settings is emphasis play based learning, holistic child development, experiential learning and developmentally appropriate progression. Seedling's supports these principles by offering exploratory, child-led play experiences that promote early foundations in literacy, numeracy, creativity and wellbeing. The cafe environment encourages learning through interaction and active exploration, reflecting the curriculums emphasis on authentic, real-life contexts.

Seedling's also links in with the Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) Plan. This Welsh Government framework promotes integration of play, learning and childcare, accessible early support services, prevention and early intervention and community-based provision (Welsh Government, 2025). Seedlings directly align with the ECPLC approach by combining play opportunities with informal parental support in an accessible, drop in setting. Another framework to link into Seedlings would be the Birth to 5 Matters. This framework highlights secure attachments, responsive caregiving, sensory exploration and individual developmental pathways (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021). Seedlings will support secure

relationships by encouraging parent-child interaction within a safe and calm environment. Sensory zones and age specific play areas reflect developmentally informed practice. According to Play Wales (2022) Under Welsh legislation, local authorities must ensure sufficient play opportunities to children. Seedlings will contribute to this by increasing accessible indoor play provision, supporting younger children who are often underrepresented in play strategies and provide inclusive and safe play environments.

Seedlings will promote early developmental support, reduce parent isolation, strengthen community connections and support preventative wellbeing strategies. This links with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as this act focuses on healthier Wales, more equal Wales, cohesive communities and prevention rather than cure (Welsh Government, 2025).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underpins children's rights within Welsh policy and practice, and Seedlings Play Café aligns closely with its principles. Article 31 recognises every child's right to rest, leisure and play, which Seedlings actively promotes by providing a safe, accessible and developmentally appropriate play environment for children aged 0–5. Article 6 highlights the child's right to life, survival and development, and the café supports this by fostering cognitive, physical, social and emotional growth through purposeful, play-based experiences. Furthermore, Article 18 emphasises the responsibility of parents in raising children and the need for appropriate support systems; Seedlings strengthens parental capacity by offering a welcoming community space that reduces isolation and encourages positive parent–child interaction. In this way, the café not only facilitates children's right to play and development but also reinforces the wider rights-based framework that supports families within Wales (Unicef, no date).

Seedlings Play Café has strong potential for future growth and expansion beyond its initial model. As a community-based early years hub, there are several opportunities to further develop services in response to local need and emerging research. One potential area for development is the introduction of structured developmental workshops, such as baby massage, early language groups, sensory sessions, or school readiness programmes. These could be delivered during quieter hours and would strengthen the café's developmental

focus while increasing revenue streams. Additionally, specialist sessions for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) could address gaps identified in local childcare sufficiency reports. In Swansea's 2022 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, although a formal, detailed breakdown of ALN provision is not fully published in the executive summary, the action plan explicitly identifies the need to undertake additional research and consultation regarding support for ALN, suggesting that current provision may not fully meet local needs and that the perceived unmet needs around ALN require further investigation (Swansea Council, 2022).

Another opportunity is the development of parent education and support programmes. Workshops on behaviour guidance, sleep routines, attachment theory, or early literacy could be offered in partnership with health visitors or early years professionals. This would enhance parental confidence and further align the café with preventative early intervention strategies in Wales such as the ECPLC Plan (Welsh Government, 2024). Expansion into community partnerships also presents future potential. Seedlings could collaborate with local schools, Flying Start services, speech and language therapists, or family support teams to provide referral pathways or host outreach sessions. This would strengthen its role as a community wellbeing hub rather than solely a leisure venue.

Digital development is another growth opportunity. Seedlings could create an online platform offering parenting blogs, developmental activity ideas, booking systems, virtual support sessions. This would extend reach beyond the physical space and build brand sustainability. In terms of business growth, future developments could include a second site in another Swansea area.

To support sustainable development, ongoing research would be beneficial. Future research could include focusing on evaluating its impact on children's early years development, including cognitive, social, emotional, language, and physical growth, to provide evidence of developmental effectiveness. Additional studies could examine parental wellbeing, confidence, and social connectedness, particularly in relation to workshops and informal support networks. Research could also explore the accessibility and engagement of children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), ensuring inclusive provision and effective use of sensory and age-appropriate resources. Ongoing market and demand analysis would

support financial sustainability while maintaining affordability and community relevance. Finally, evaluating the alignment of services with local authority priorities, Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, and Welsh early years policies would strengthen the café's role as a preventative, development-focused, and community-based early years hub.

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