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# HAPPY HOOPERS NURSERY

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EYEC 6012 (PART 1&2)



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Janna Bint-E Saif (2129742)



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## Introduction

Happy Hoppers Nursery is a nursery that stimulates children's learning through creative play and multi-sensory physical activity. The intent of the nursery is to create a comfortable and warm environment where children can participate in and learn different tasks that may require the use of their faculties, specifically those that help in sensory-motor, social-emotional, and developmental milestones. The basis for this initiative is my prior and personal experience in the field of early years' learning and development, calling for the adoption of a new culture of play and sensory learning for young children.

Sensory play can be fun and is highly effective for brain growth and skills such as language, problem-solving, and emotional regulation (Gascoyne, 2016). This approach fits within Happy Hoppers Nursery, where a structured curriculum aims to give children the best beginning of life. Our goal in embracing play-based learning is to cultivate curiosity, creativity, and a lifetime love of learning. Our highly skilled and committed staff will assist each child's individual developmental path, encouraging cognitive, social, and emotional development via stimulating and interesting activities.

## Business Concept

Happy Hoppers Nursery has a fundamental belief in the role of sensory play in early childhood development. At Happy Hoopers Nursery, we believe that the power of sensory play can inspire and develop young minds. Our goal is to establish a secure, welcoming, and engaging atmosphere where children may learn, develop, and explore. Touching activities facilitate children's ability to learn, and motor activities that involve touching increase nerve connections that enable the learning of complex matters (Ayres & Robbins, 2005).

The nursery provides sufficient space and original equipment to play and learn through different textures, sounds, and visuals in a free style yet structured pattern.

The promotion of inclusion remains a key concept so that all children can benefit from the nursery's effective programs regardless of their level of development, learning ability, or physical/mental disabilities, including autistic spectrum disorder (Ashburner et al., 2008). Focused solely on young learners, the nursery has adopted programs that engage children through touch, vision, audio, and taste, among others. It encompasses the development of sensory room and outdoor play area, generally referred to as sensory garden. Every element of learning addresses physical coordination, cognition, spatial and directional skills, personal-social skills, and communication and language.

## **Innovation and Early Years Education**

Happy Hoppers Nursery is unique as it integrates both sensory play and early childhood education, ensuring the availability of such services. To be more precise, Happy Hoppers is not just a nursery; it offers a wide range of choices regarding a child's preparedness for school and incorporates elements that enhance present and future senses and creativity. This aligns with theories of learning in early childhood education, as the play-based approach used in this setting effectively supports children's cognitive and emotional development (Hadfield et al., 2015).

The selected activities help children develop problem-solving skills, fine and gross motor skills, language skills, and social skills. The nursery supplements its curriculum with frameworks such as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), enhancing its educational approach in line with national standards.

Additionally, incorporating sensory play into lesson plans enhances children's attentiveness, initiative, and readiness for learning throughout their academic journey (Gascoyne, 2016). Hands-on learning is a key focus, ensuring children are actively involved in their education in constructive ways.

## **Benefits of Happy Hoppers Nursery**

The benefits of Happy Hoppers Nursery include:

- **Cognitive Development:** Engaging with various sensory stimuli increases neural pathways, improving memory, learning, and skills (Gascoyne, 2016).
- **Emotional and Social Growth:** Sensory play supports self-regulation, emotional expression, and enhances children's ability to develop better interpersonal skills (Gascoyne, 2016).
- **Motor Skills Enhancement:** Water play, sand play, and fine motor activities help improve hand-eye coordination and dexterity.
- **Inclusive Learning:** Learning accommodations are available for children with developmental disabilities.
- **Parent Engagement:** Workshops are offered to parents as part of a parental involvement program, and take-home activities that support sensory learning are encouraged.
- **Encouraging Creativity:** Sensory experiences promote innovative thinking, self-expression, and confidence in one's abilities.

## Challenges and Barriers

Although a sensory-based nursery has many positives, there are challenges in its implementation:

- **High Initial Costs:** Setting up a sensory-rich environment requires a high investment in equipment, materials, and staff training.
- **Parental Awareness:** Educational outreach may be necessary in cases where a few parents may not have sufficiently grasped the benefits of sensory play.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** To meet health and safety standards, work needs to be rigorous in the design and monitoring of sensory materials and playgrounds.
- **Staff Training Needs:** Educators need specialised training to efficiently conduct sensory work and tailor such experiences to the individual needs of boys and girls.

- **Sustainability of Resources:** Ongoing financial planning is needed for Continuous updates and maintenance of sensory materials.

## Target Audience and Stakeholders

Happy Hoppers Nursery's primary stakeholders consist of:

- **Children (Ages 0-5):** Those who primarily benefit as main beneficiaries, receiving structured and flexible sensory experiences that foster holistic development.
- **Parents and Guardians:** Parents looking for quality, cutting-edge childcare solutions to support their children's early learning journey.
- **Early Childhood Educators:** Teachers and childcare providers who would like to incorporate sensory play into their teaching methods.
- **Local Authorities and Community Organizations:** Investors in early years education, including potential supporters in the pharmaceutical industry and the commercial sector, seeking funding and partnerships.
- **Healthcare Professionals:** Collaboration with occupational therapists and child psychologists would be more effective in enhancing sensory play programs.

## Expertise and Suitability

My passion for early childhood education is rooted in my father's special love of teaching. I founded Happy Hoppers Nursery after becoming a mother myself. I grew up in a place where education and child development were highly valued. I have personally observed that a well-structured learning environment plays a crucial role in shaping a child's future.

I am well-equipped in the area of sensory development, particularly focusing on young children. Furthermore, I have undergone specialized training in early childhood development and education, play therapy, and sensory integration. These qualifications

have provided me with the knowledge required to establish and manage a high-quality nursery that prioritizes learning activities.

## Financial Overview

|                                    |                                                                |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Premises:</b>                   | £20,000 - £30,000 annually.                                    |
| <b>Remodeling:</b>                 | £10,000 - £20,000 for child-friendly facilities.               |
| <b>Equipment &amp; Materials:</b>  | £5,000 - £10,000 for sensory play equipment.                   |
| <b>Outdoor Play Equipment:</b>     | £5,000 - £10,000 for playground structures.                    |
| <b>Staff Salaries:</b>             | £15,000 - £20,000 per staff member for the first three months. |
| <b>Marketing:</b>                  | £1,000 - £2,000 for online advertising.                        |
| <b>Insurance &amp; Compliance:</b> | £1,000 - £1,500 annually.                                      |

## Marketing and Outreach Strategy

Strategic marketing also involves utilizing a combination of online and offline advertising methods to appeal to parents and other stakeholders of Happy Hoppers Nursery. Strategies include:

- **Social Media Campaigns:** Regular Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube updates showcasing the benefits of sensory play.
- **Community Events:** Organizing open days and sensory workshops for parents and children.
- **School Partnerships:** Referral programs with local schools.
- **Local Advertising:** Distributing flyers and posters and making radio announcements for greater visibility.
- **Website Development:** An informative and user-friendly website offering virtual tours and online registration.

## Future Growth and Expansion

To develop and sustain Happy Hoppers Nursery, the following strategic intents are as follows:

- **Extend Services:** Open new locations in strategic areas that are primary motor working areas.
- **Specialization:** Establish a sensory play training program for educators and parents.
- **Online Store Development:** Offer sensory play kits and articles for sale in an online store.
- **Engage with Researchers:** Improve best practices through research cooperation with universities.

## Conclusion

Happy Hoppers Nursery offers sensory play services, helping early childhood education institutions provide children with the best start in life. It is a business venture seeking to revolutionize nursery education, particularly based on the principles of diversity, happiness, and brain development. Happy Hoppers is founded as a long-term successful business opportunity with the potential to engage with the community and establish a clear financial plan to strengthen its successful marketing strategy.

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# Business Plan Part 2 - Happy Hoppers Nursery: Research & Analysis

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## **Introduction**

Happy Hoppers Nursery is an early year provision aimed at providing young children aged 0-5 years with activities through sensory play. Sensory play is one of the most significant innovations for child development, as it aids in a child's mental health, emotional well-being, social advancement, and motor coordination. This section establishes the link between sensory play and early childhood frameworks, the latest findings, policies, the emergence of obstacles, and possibilities for development.

## **The Importance of Sensory Play in Early Years Development**

Sensory play gives a child a chance to learn socially through touch, vision, hearing, taste, smell, and motion sensations. Sensory events have been established to enhance brain development and problem-solving (Gascoyne, 2016). This aligns with Piaget's model of learning (Piaget, 1952), in which the principles of play emphasize that the environment should be sensory-rich to support tangible play.

Sensory play also helps a child acquire social-emotional skills, such as self-regulation, including sharing. This aligns with Parten's (1932) classification of play activities, where children learn teamwork and communication skills during sensory activities. Furthermore, sensory experiences are not a singular approach but are also associated with language development, as children can better express their thoughts through hands-on learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

## **Alignment with Early Years Frameworks & Policies**

Happy Hoppers Nursery follows key early years frameworks and policies that promote play-based learning with the child at the centre. Sensory play is important because it is active learning and exploration, but it is also central to child development under the UK's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework (Department for Education, 2024). The Seven Key Areas of Learning outlined in the EYFS are enriched through sensory play:

communication and language, physical development, personal, social, and emotional development, among others.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015) also acknowledges sensory play and recommends that children with sensory processing difficulties or autism spectrum condition should not be excluded from a relevant and engaging environment. Research has shown that sensory-friendly environments enhance engagement and reduce anxiety in children (Ashburner et al., 2008).

An internationally recognized approach to learning, known as the Reggio Emilia approach, also considers sensory play as an integral part of its methodology, particularly through the concept of the '100 languages of children' (Malaguzzi, 1996). Happy Hoppers Nursery uses these evidence-based frameworks in combination to provide high-quality early years education.

## **Challenges and Barriers**

### **1. Funding and Resource Allocation**

The main problem encountered in implementing a sensory-focused nursery is securing enough funding for it. Sensory play materials such as textured toys, water tables, and interactive learning stations need to be maintained and replaced (Moyes, 2010). In addition, training staff to provide effective sensory play can be expensive.

### **2. Space and Safety Considerations**

To be safe while being sensitive, a sensory-rich environment requires careful planning. Some sensory materials can be choking hazards or may not be sanitary, such as sand, water, and small objects. A key concern is designing a space that is both exploratory and safe while also meeting regulatory requirements (To, 2020).

### **3. Training and Staff Awareness**

The benefits of sensory play are not known to all early year practitioners. To provide educators with the means to carry out sensory experiences effectively and to ensure each

child's sensory needs are met, continuous professional development is essential. Strategies for working with neurodivergent children with different sensory thresholds must also be included in training (Hoyle & Hyde, 2024).

#### **4. Parental Perceptions**

Some parents may not fully understand the educational value of sensory play and may perceive it as 'messy' rather than beneficial (Gascoyne, 2016). As a result, parents' participation and interest should be obtained through measures such as planning awareness events in the form of parent workshops and using different approaches to foster discussions.

### **Links to Current Practice, Research, Policies, and Legislative Documents**

Happy Hoppers Nursery is a nursery school that focuses on sensory play and has a strong connection with research on child development in early years and relevant policies. According to various studies, the use of toys that encourage sensory interaction positively influences children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. This section, therefore, seeks to assess how Happy Hoppers Nursery facilitates the connection between research evidence, early years policies, and practice.

#### **Supporting Research on Sensory Play and Child Development**

Present-day research studies have identified the significant role of sensory activities in supporting brain development. While Piaget (1952) emphasizes that practical experiences are essential in the learning process, Vygotsky (1978) elaborates that learning is inherently social. Jayasankara Reddy, Hunjan, and Jha (2021) confirmed that integrating sensory experiences with neural connections enhances problem-solving abilities and memory.

Findings from studies by McQuilten, Hjorth, and Borovica (2023), as well as Gascoyne (2016), indicate that children in sensory-rich environments exhibit better executive function, creativity, and resilience. These principles are applied at Happy Hoppers

Nursery, where children are provided with multiple learning opportunities that foster their overall development.

## **Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policies**

SEN children benefit from specific types of sensory play, as they receive their support and developmental provisions through these experiences. The SEND Code of Practice calls for an inclusive learning environment that supports children with sensory processing disorders, autism, speech delays, and other developmental challenges (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015). Sensory play aids in:

- Regulating sensory responses by controlling exposure.
- Improving communication for children with speech difficulties.
- Providing calming activities that help reduce anxiety and improve focus.

A mix of adaptable lighting, quiet spaces, and specialized play zones will create sensory-friendly spaces at Happy Hoppers Nursery to accommodate varied learning needs. Staff will be trained to implement sensory strategies tailored to each child.

## **UNCRC and Play-Based Learning**

There is no doubt that play is a right recognized by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Article 31 (General Assembly resolution 44/25, 1989). Additionally, research by the Lego Foundation (2018) highlights that play fosters creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. Happy Hoppers Nursery incorporates sensory play to provide children with a holistic experience that encourages learning and development.

## **Government Reports and Research Initiatives**

Play-based learning is stressed by government reports. Gilbert, Harte, & Patrick (2011) and Gadzikowski (2022) highlight play as essential for problem-solving, resilience, and school readiness. These are guidelines to be followed by Happy Hoppers Nursery, which follows an evidence-based, child-centered approach to early education.

## **Health and Safety in Sensory Play**

All sensory play needs to be carried out in accordance with health and safety regulations outlined by the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Children Act (2004). Happy Hoppers Nursery will implement:

- Non-toxic materials for safe exploration.
- Resources that minimize risks and are appropriate for the age group.
- Hygiene protocols to maintain cleanliness in play areas.

Safeguarding, first aid, and child protection policies to ensure a safe learning environment for all staff and children.

## **Future Opportunities and Expansion**

### **Scaling the Sensory Play Model**

The long-term vision is for the sensory play model to expand Happy Hoppers Nursery into multiple settings. This could be achieved through a franchise model, allowing high-quality, play-based learning to reach many communities, including urban and rural areas with limited early years provision.

### **Collaboration with Research Institutions**

Through collaboration with early childhood researchers and universities, empirical evidence will support the nursery's sensory play approach. The model's success can be further validated and generate policy interest by conducting longitudinal studies on cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes.

### **Government and Private Funding**

Growth will require securing government grants and private funding. Examples of such initiatives for infrastructure development and resource acquisition include the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and corporate sponsorships.

## **Conclusion**

The Happy Hoppers Nursery concept has been created to elevate early years education through sensory play. We link our approach to established policies, address

implementation challenges, and look to the future to create a productive and inclusive learning environment for young children. Sensory play holds great potential in shaping the next stage of early years education, fostering holistic development, and preparing children for lifelong learning.

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