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Transition Buddies



By Emma Needham

My Business Proposal

My business proposal is to be able create a teddy called Transitions Buddies that is going to support the children when they are faced with daily transitions.

I am hoping that Build-A-Bear will become my business supplier.



I currently work in a setting with children who have additional learning needs, the children in the setting struggle daily with transitions and due to the lack of staff to child ratio it is difficult to be able to fully support and comfort each child individually. This is why I wanted to create something that I know will provide the children with comfort as well as being able to support them through the daily transitions they face daily.

Nearly every young child takes comfort in a teddy, blanket or some kind of toy but when they attend a setting their comforts are normally taken off them at the front door, staff do this because they fear losing the children's belongings or getting them damaged which is why having a transition buddy of their own will avoid this problem. Each teddy will be personalised with the children's initial's which will be sublimated onto the soul of the teddy which will be done by myself to keep the overall costs down as much as possible, by labelling the teddies it will make it easier to identify which teddy belongs to which child when they are due to go home.

Babies and young children often develop a strong and positive relationship with their soft teddies which will result in them being provided with a sense of stability just like the stability they receive from their parents. So being able to provide as many children as possible with my transition buddies will help them in more ways than one, it is also going to help them to build emotional independence which shows that my idea will work. Not only will they support their transition period, but they are also going to provide them with a sense of safety and that is extremely important.

The finical cost of the Transition Buddies.

The initial cost for the bears which I would like to use are currently retails at the cost price of £18.50 and I am hoping to work with the founder of build-a-bear to get a discounted price of £8.33 which means we will get them for a discount of 55%.

At the start of the school year the total number of bears we would need to purchase would be twenty giving an overall price of £166.50, however this price does not include any additional bears that we might need to purchase throughout the year for newcomers if children leave earlier than planned.

Funding.

I am hoping to get the backing from the local Government to provide me with the funding without it effecting the school or units budget that they already are entitled to.

I am hoping that the local Government can see how beneficial the Transition Buddies are going to be for the children as well as seeing how important it is to make sure that every child will be able to receive one. If they can see that then they will be able to understand that this is something that the unit should be funding to make sure that every child receives their very own transition buddy regardless of their parents' backgrounds or income.

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What are the benefits of providing children with their very own Transition Buddy.

Starting school is a scary time for most children especially for children with additional learning needs or possible delays. So, by providing them with a comfort that they can have when they feel scared is something I believe will have positive impact on children's emotions and mental health.

All children find comfort in teddies, but most settings have rule's that state that no personal belongings are to be taken into the setting, this is so that their personal belongings are not damaged, loss or destroyed in school which is why every bear will look the same to avoid the pressure of damaging, losing, or destroying them off the children and staff. The only difference between the teddies will be that the paw of the bear will have the children's initials embroidered into it.

I know that if my son was able to take his bear into school when he first started it would of being an easier transition for him, the teacher's, the rest of the children in his class and for me as his parent.

The transition buddies will benefit the children, the school day and the parents which should show just how beneficial they can become.

What would success look like for me?

The aim of my business plan is to be able to support children when they are transitioning from being at home to starting school or when they are transitioning from one room to another and if I can do that for just one child then I would say that is success.

For me success is seeing that children with additional learning needs find it easier with transitioning which means that their school day will be a lot less stressful for them.

It would also be that children's attendants improves because the children will not have to worry so much about transitioning because they will know that they have their support network with them as well as additional support then from teachers or parents.

In the long-term success for me would be that all schools across the UK use my transition buddies and maybe one day they become an international support network for children.

How will I market my Transition Buddies.

Once I have successfully introduced my transition buddies to the children in the unit, I will gather feedback from the children's parents and the staff who are working in the unit.

Once I have all the feedback needed to show how beneficial these transition buddies are for the children, I will organise a meeting with the head teachers from all the local schools. For this meeting I will put together a presentation with everything they will need to know about the transition buddies along with the evidence of success from the trial run in my setting. I will then allow time for the head teachers to ask any questions they might have as well as being able to see in person and example of one of our transition buddies.

Upon the overall success from several schools, I will then prepare an online forum where other professional practitioners can look at the information about my transition buddies and the benefits they hold, there will also be an email address where they can ask any questions or make an order for their school or setting too.

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What challenges or barriers could I face?

One of the first challenges I am going to face with my business idea is getting the partnership with build-a-bear and coming up with a contract that they are happy with as well as still be on target with my proposal. Due to the success of build-a-bear I am hoping that they can see that if they become my providers, they will not only benefit from having regular business, but they will also be receiving free advertising. Although this is something seen as a challenge, I believe that I am the right person to get them to sign the deal, through my passion and experience as a practitioner and a parent I will have all the information needed to get the contract.

Another challenge that I am going to face is getting the local government to provide the funding without it effecting the funding that is already allocated for the school/ unit. However, once I have a deal made and put in writing from build-a-bear, along with my business proposal I am hoping this challenge is something I can easily overcome. Failure to get the funding from the government I have a backup idea to get the money to purchase the transition teddies, I will do some fund raising to get the money needed and if there is any left-over money then I will make sure I put some to one side in case we need to purchase additional bears in the future. The remaining money will then go towards future fund raising and equipment needed for the children. Although this is an option, I am still hoping to get the funding from the government so that I can put all my extra time into making sure the transition buddies become successful and provide the support they are intended on providing.

There are many challenges/ barriers that I could possibly be face but the success of the transition bears and being able to support the children outweighs the challenges or barriers.

Part Two

A transition buddy is not only designed to support children through transitioning they are also designed to support children's development and their knowledge and understanding. For children with additional learning needs see all types of transitions as a negative thing which can have an impact on their wellbeing which is why it is important that practitioners and parents have a clear understanding on how to support the children correctly for their needs. It is also important that when working with children with additional learning needs that the practitioners, teachers, and parents do everything that they can to keep their daily routine the same as every other day. If the adult knows that there is going to be a change in the routine, then they have a responsibility of care to inform the children as soon as possible and to make sure they do everything they can to make the new change in transition as smooth for the children as possible which is where the transition buddies come in to practice. The transition buddies are there to provide the children with the same amount of stability that they receive from their parents. (Mentally Healthy Schools, no date)

In the blog on Bears For Humanity website that was written in 2022 talk about "Teddy Bears and Transitional Objects Help A Child Learn and" they have explained that parents and early years practitioners need to know how to support children through transitioning and they break up their research under several sub headings so that it is easier for parents or practitioners to be able to find the right support for the correct age of the child they are caring for without wasting time reading things that will not benefit them. Under the heading babies which is beneficial to me due to the mental age of the children I look after are they have stated that a teddy bear or blankets provide the children with their very own companion that they can turn to for a hug which also helps them to develop their motor skills. Which means that I am not only supporting my children with support through transition I am also supporting them with their development which is also important. Babies and young children often develop a strong and positive relationship with their soft teddies which will result in them being provided with a sense of stability just like the stability they receive from their parents. So being able to provide as many children as possible with my transition buddies will help them in more ways than one, it is also going to help them to build emotional independence which shows that my idea will work. Not only will they support their transition period, but they are also going to provide them with a sense of safety and that is extremely important.

Being able to support children's well-being is extremely important in early years and it is anyone who is working in early years responsibility to support every child with the everyday ups and downs that they are going to face and by providing them with a transition buddy is going to give them more confidence in school which will improve their well-being. Providing support for children's well-being should be at the top of the agenda for every teacher or practitioner and they should be doing everything they can to celebrate children's well-being. (Barnardo's, 2024)

The transition buddies provide respect and support for the children's well-being by being the friend that every child needs and should have, when they have their teddies with them they can feel safer and more secure which in return will support and benefit their well-being which overall is the main aim for a transition buddy. Although the transition buddies are designed to support them through transitions it is also designed to improve their struggles when they are attending the setting. When children struggle with transitions, they often become very scared and emotional which overall has a negative impact on their well-being. But with a transition buddy always by their side this is something that will become a lot less of an issue for children because they will always have their support network with them.

Birthto5matters (no date) explain that children's development is something that is a continuous progression over many years and that there are many daily factors that can influence their development and for children with additional learning needs transitioning is one of the daily factors that can influence the children's development. It is important to be able to know what daily factors children might face to be able to either avoid them or to know how to support them when they do happen. Development is not just physical it also involves cognitive, memory, language, and communication along with feelings and relationships. Having a good positive relationship is extremely important for children which and they can form positive relationships with their transition buddies which will then support them with other areas of their development. Children with additional learning needs they have a very good memory when it comes to their routine and if there is a slight change in routine then this can influence their emotional development resulting in the children having a meltdown, but their transition buddies are designed to make sure they are comforted when this happens. It is important to provide children with positive experiences to help form neurological connections and that is why it is going to be beneficial for the children to have their very own transition buddy to help provide the emotional support of starting the day right when the children arrive at school. This is providing them with a positive start to their day and giving them the most relaxing experience when they are traveling to school.

There are several barriers that are faced when working with children and with the transition buddies a possible barrier that might be faced is if the child forgets to bring their transition buddy to school with them, then they might think that another child's transition buddy is there's which could end in arguments and causing emotional upset. To avoid this from happening then the setting will make sure that there are always extra transitions buddies in the storage cupboard to make sure that if a child does forget their transition buddies, then the setting can provide them with a spare one. Bowlby's theory on attachment means that once they have formed an attachment with their transition buddies then they will become an important part of their lives and they will turn to their buddies for support and comfort when they are feeling scared or lonely.

There has been research to see if transition buddies are already something and although there are several ideas to support the idea there is not a current teddy bear that is being used in schools to support children with additional learning needs through everyday transitions.

Twinkl is a website many teachers use as a teaching method, Twinkl came up during research with a printable sheet that explains different ideas to create an overall class transition tool. The sheet can be found when searching Transition Teddy Ideas on Twinkl, they also explain that a

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teddy is an important and effective support for young children through transitioning from nursery to school. This sheet can be used along side a transition buddy for an overall class however this might have challenges when it comes to using it for children with additional learning needs who are non-verbal, this is because the help sheet requires interaction from the children. However, with the right communication tools to be able to include the children this can be something that proves to be effective.

The transition buddies are going to be something that the children are going to have for as long as they feel supported by it, once they leave the setting, they can keep their transition buddy with them, and this is a long-term support system and not just something that is going to benefit them only while they are attending school. Knowing that this is something they are going to take with them and that they are going to benefit from it for as long as they need it means that the future for these children has become that little bit easier and they know that when they are faced with transitions, they did not expect to face they will always be supported whether there is an adult around them or not.

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