

Leadership skills in entrepreneurship

Amaka Osisi

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AI Statement

I acknowledge the use of AI
I used Chat GPT with following prompts make
a logo very similar to the Caerphilly Play one
(image provided) but add Forest Play and
Explore to it and make it more forest themed.



(Caerphilly Play,
2024)



(Chat GPT, 2026)

Forest Play and Explore

A new provision delivered within Caerphilly Play

Amaka Osi

What is Forest Play and Explore?



- Forest Play and Explore would be a family-based outdoor holiday provision, open to children aged 3 to 11, with a particular focus on children aged 3 to 7, supporting the early stages of their life. The sessions will be delivered during school holidays and half terms with a focus on Forest Schools ethos of child led learning and exploration (Forest School Association, no date).
- According to Watts (2020) and Bilton (2010) outdoor learning supports holistic development. A key part of the programme is to support early years development and ensure they have meaningful opportunities to explore and learn about the natural world around them in their early childhood which can be achieved in a forest environment (Rekers and Waters-Davies, 2021).
- Forest Play and Explore strongly focuses on being a family-based model, creating an environment where children and their parents or carers can explore together. This approach encourages shared experiences, family engagement and community connection, reflecting the values of the Caerphilly Play service (Caerphilly County Borough Council, 2025).
- The aim of this programme is to ensure that children have access to meaningful outdoor learning experiences across the whole of Caerphilly County Borough. Currently these opportunities are limited especially for children from disadvantaged areas. The programme will travel across all areas of the borough meaning that children are able to attend regardless of where they live. The sessions will be free of charge ensuring that the service continues to be accessible for all.

Where the idea came from?



- This idea came from my experience of working and supporting children in nurseries and primary schools where I have been able to support forest school lessons and also from my involvement of delivering Caerphilly Play sessions such as Play in the Park and Food and Fun. Having been involved in various provisions I have been able to see the impact and power that play has on early childhood development, Play Wales (2022), Moyles (2015) and Welsh Government (2014) also highlight this. I believe Caerphilly Play has had a great impact within different communities and has provided children with meaningful play experiences. However, I feel there is an opportunity to expand this service further by delivering a new early year's outdoor play provision based off the Forest School Model, encouraging learning through play and exploration.
- Many structured forest school programmes are expensive or private which limits access for many families, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Forest School Finder, 2025). I feel that all families should have access to ample outdoor play experiences. This programme ensures that we can begin to address these issues and improve accessibility.

Why this would be successful?



- I believe that this business plan will be successful as it builds on the already established Caerphilly Play Service (Caerphilly County Borough Council, 2025). With it being an extension of this service the relationships have already been built with families and communities and it has a well regarded reputation. This means individuals within the community are more likely to trust the programme and engage with it. Being part of the Caerphilly Play service allows staff who already possess the playwork qualifications and expertise to run this programme. There is also a demand for outdoor learning provisions and the Curriculum for Wales and Gill (2014) highlights how important outdoor learning is and the benefits it can have. Forest schools tend to be expensive and only run during term time, families are often looking for low cost ways to keep their children entertained during school holidays and this service achieves this. The scheme is a travelling service so it reaches many different areas including disadvantaged areas promoting inclusivity aligning with Welsh Policy.

Why I am the best person for this?

- I believe I am the best person to develop this programme because of my experience of working with various children in different environments and because of my experience within Caerphilly Play provision. Through these opportunities I have built upon my skills and developed a greater understanding of early childhood development. I have learnt and observed firsthand how important, as part of children's development, that they have access to various play opportunities and that outdoor play also has a positive impact.
- Working with and supporting children in outdoor environments I can see how it helps them build confidence and resilience, be creative and build connection with the world around them (Waite, 2017). This underpins the values of both the Curriculum for Wales and the Forest School association (Welsh Government, no date; Forest School Association, no date). I believe that with my knowledge and expertise children will thrive within the Forest Play and Explore service. I am confident that I can deliver a successful programme as part of an extension of Caerphilly Play services.



Market Research



Market Research

- I initially carried out primary market research by directly speaking to parents and families within the local area (Start Up Loans, 2026). Many of those conversations happened at previous Caerphilly Play sessions that the families attended. From these I discovered parents frequently reported that they are always looking for ways to entertain their children during the holidays which does not involve screen time. They also stated that it is great when they are able to get to enjoy the outdoors with their children but there is a lack of structured provisions and that existing activities are often costly, Play Wales (2022) supports this. The Playworks Holiday Project also suggests that there is demand for free structured outdoor play activities (Welsh Government, 2025).
- I went on to do further research and examined the current Forest School providers. I found that these sessions are mostly run privately and that they all charge a fee per session. I identified that depending on which Forest School they choose to attend, the charges ranged between £12 and £25 per session per child, with the sessions often increasing during the holidays (Wild Blossom Forest School, no date; Wild Roots Wales, no date). This cost builds up overtime limiting access and creating financial barriers, especially for families from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Welsh Government (2024) also recognises these barriers. Therefore, it is important that Forest Play and Explore remains free of charge ensuring accessibility for all.
- Caerphilly Play already delivers various sessions (Caerphilly County Borough Council, 2025). However, I found there are limits to this when it comes to the outdoors and being in nature. Delivering a Forest School style provision would overcome this.
- Following guidance from Barringer (2022), I have conducted both primary and secondary market research and I have been able to identify a social need for more outdoor provisions that are accessible and affordable. I believe with Forest Play and Explore this can be achieved.

Marketing

Marketing

To ensure that Forest Play and Explore reaches the target audience of families, marketing would be carried out through Caerphilly Plays existing social media platforms as well as advertising on School Letters and School Apps. The sessions will also be shared on the official Caerphilly Council website alongside existing sessions. Information would also be directly shared with those families who already attend Caerphilly Play activities.



(Vecteezy, no date)



(Vecteezy, no date)

Chwarae yn y Goedwig
Forest Play and Explore

Am Ddim Free
11am - 2pm

Monday / Dydd Llun **Parc Senghenydd** **14.04.25**
Senghenydd Park

Tuesday / Dydd Mawrth **Parc Bargod** **15.04.25**
Bargoed Park

Wednesday / Dydd Mercher **Parc Waunfawr** **16.04.25**
Waunfawr Park

Come explore the woods with us!
Activities include:
• Den Building • Bug Hunting • Nature Crafts
• Woodland Games • and more!

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth am bob parc a chyfleusterau, ewch i:
✉ rhagor.roedd@caerffili.gov.uk
☎ neu ffonio 01443 863232
🌐 neu Blynnyddoedd@Caerffili.gov.uk

For further information regarding each park and facilities, please contact:
✉ greener.spaces@caerphilly.gov.uk
☎ or phone 01443 863232
or earlyyears@caerphilly.gov.uk

Chwarae Caerffili
Caerphilly Play

(Chat GPT, 2026)

Financial Feasibility



- In order to turn this business plan into a reality Forest Play and Explore will need some initial funding to start the process. However, many costs are already covered under Caerphilly Play, such as staffing structures, admin and insurance and this will reduce the amount needed. Despite this there are still some initial costs, one of which would be Forest School training for play workers. Initially I would train two members of staff, one being myself to complete Level 3 Forest School training. Two members of staff would be trained due to costs, which is between £925 to £1000. This is a substantial expenditure to begin with therefore other staff would gradually receive the training. Whilst the initial cost is high, it is a long-term investment that will gradually reduce. The members of staff who are not trained will shadow the qualified workers to strengthen their knowledge and expertise.
- Another start-up cost would be outdoor equipment. This would include many resources such as tarpaulin, rope, ground sheets, fire equipment, portable mud kitchen, tyres, balance beams, first aid kit for outdoors, waterproofs and art supplies such as string, wool, paint, etc. All equipment initially would cost up to £2,000. Although this is initially costly, the majority of items will be used long-term meaning ongoing costs would be low.
- Overall initial start-up costs will be approximately £5000.

Funding

- Forest Play and Explore would be funded through Welsh Government and the Local Authority as I am aware they already support holiday provisions and the Playworks Holiday Project explains how funding might be used (Welsh Government, 2025). Forest Play and Explore comes under Caerphilly Play therefore it would be ideal to apply for grants through organisations that already support Caerphilly play. Some of these include GAVO and The National Lottery Community Fund. There is also an option to apply for further funding through the National Play Day Grant, supporting the specific week commencing National Play Day.
- All funding that is received will go straight back into the business and will be used for running sessions, training staff and buying equipment. Future plans could include working closely in partnership with schools.



(Kairos Community, 2019)

Cashflow Overview

In the first year Forest Play and Explore would require a funding pot of £50,000 to cover all expenses. The largest cost of this being staff wages, estimated to be approximately £36,000. This is based on 6 members of staff working 6 hours a day per week, working 11 holiday weeks a year. Total expenditure including staff wages, training, equipment, consumable materials and a contingency fund is £46,500, leaving a remaining balance of £3,500 which could roll on to the next year to ensure that these sessions continue to run.



Expenditure Category	Estimated Amount (£)
Staff Wages	£36,000
Forest School Training	£2,000
Equipment	£2,000
Consumable Materials	£5,000
Contingency Fund	£1,500
Total Expenditure	£46,500

Income Source Amount = £50,000

Total Expenditure = £46,500

50,000 – 46,500 = 3,500

Remaining Balance = £3,500

Part 2B

This section will critically analyse the potential impact that Forest Play and Explore will have on young children. Strongly focusing on the benefits, the business will have on early years development, how it aligns with current policies and legislation and any potential barriers or challenges that may arise.

Beekhuizen, *et al.* (2026) states that outdoor play supports children's holistic development and that children often hope for more opportunities to play outdoors. Liu and Green (2026) study suggests that children have a need to build connections with their natural environment. Wünsche, Beery and Fridberg (2025) and Rekers and Waters-Davies (2021) agree and suggest that structured outdoor activities such as forest school bring children joy and strengthen their relationship with the world around them. Forest Play and Explore has the potential to provide children with these opportunities within their own communities. Outdoor spaces encourage children's physical activity supporting their gross and fine motor skills development, emphasizing the importance that children have opportunities to play outside (Xu *et al.*, 2026). Similarly, James, *et al.* (2025) agrees and also argues that increased physical activity may reduce screen time leading to a healthier lifestyle. White (2014) suggests that loose parts provided in the outdoors supports scientific and mathematical thinking skills as well as symbolic skills, contributing to their cognitive development aligning with Froebelian principles (Tovey, 2020). Fogarty, Hurley and Barron (2026) study found that children spending time in the outdoors contributed to improved well-being. This is supported further by Macaulay (2024) research, which states that forest schools are associated with a positive effect on overall well-being. It is important that Forest Play and Explore incorporates additional materials in their sessions such as loose parts, tyres, balance beams, etc, as this will create more opportunities for various play types (Ramsden *et al.*, 2025).

Wijtzes, *et al.* (2014) and Loebach, *et al.* (2021) found that children of disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds had a lower level of outdoor play therefore this business will be free of charge to reach the target audience. Parents also highlighted that lower-level outdoor play is associated with their concern around traffic and that there is a lack of high-quality play spaces (Sandseter *et al.* 2020). As the sessions will run at forest settings, they are more likely to be away from busy roads and sessions will be of high quality as there will be extra resources and materials as well as trained members of staff to ensure children get the most out of their experience.

Forest Play and explore aligns with current legislation and frameworks. The UNCRC Article 31 and Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 state that children have a right to play and that they should have opportunities to partake in play (United Nations, 1989; Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010). This programme supports the measure, and it is embedded within the delivery of the sessions. Welsh Government (2023) highlights the importance for outdoor learning but suggests that there are inconsistencies and lack of experiences, indicating a need for sessions such as Forest Play and Explore. The Curriculum for Wales emphasises the importance of the outdoors and the positive impact it can have on learning (Tinney, 2023).

Forest Play and Explore is unique in comparison to other forest school clubs and holiday provisions as the majority of holiday provisions are delivered indoors. In contrast to this Forest Play and Explore will operate predominantly outdoor providing children and families with meaningful activities in natural environments (Kiviranta *et al.*, 2023).

Although there are many forest schools across Wales, they are often delivered in a fixed location. This can limit access for families who do not live in the immediate area (Children and Nature Network, 2023). Forest Play and Explore offers an alternative to this by reducing geographical barriers through delivery in various locations within the Caerphilly area. The programme will adopt a mobile service model enabling flexibility and wider community reach (Antink-Meyer, Lorsbach and Brown, 2024). This approach is already used successfully by Caerphilly Play and their established transport arrangements will continue to support delivery as part of Forest Play and Explore.

As well as this many forest schools and holiday provisions require families to pay attendance fees, which can create a financial barrier and creates issues of accessibility (Welsh Government, 2014). By offering a free service this programme has the potential to reduce financial pressures for parents and carers and promote participation. However, whilst this does decrease the financial inequality gap, there may still be limitations around transport and parents being available which will need to be taken into account.

Another aspect of this provision is it will follow a family-based model. Unlike many services that operate mainly as childcare, Forest Play and Explore encourages active participation by parents and carers. Watts (2020) and Bronfenbrenner (Hayes, O'Toole and Halpenny, 2022) highlights the importance parent, and carers have on early childhood development. Following this model families are able to spend quality time together in the outdoors, strengthening relationships while supporting children's development. However, this model may exclude some families as some parents or carers may not be able to attend because of other responsibilities such as care or work commitments. Therefore, it is important that the business receives ongoing feedback and actively ensures flexibility when running sessions where possible.

While individual aspects of this service may already exist in other provisions, it is the combination of outdoor delivery, a mobile model, free access and a family-based approach that all makes Forest Play and Explore unique.

One of the potential barriers the business may face is a lack of funding. The Welsh Government (2014) highlights that whilst there are ways to receive funding, it emphasises that organisations must meet specific eligibility criteria. While it is anticipated that Forest Play and Explore would meet these requirements, the programme would rely heavily on grant funding as its main income source, particularly from the Welsh Government and the local authority. This reliance creates financial vulnerability.

Play Wales (2022) reinforces the argument that low finances may be a potential limitation and also states that high quality play provisions rely heavily on funding. Furthermore, Audit Wales (2024) also indicates that local authorities are likely to face issues over financial sustainability which puts pressure on the business financially and it could have a significant impact as part of the funding will come from the local authority. Given these financial risks it is important that costs are kept as low as possible. Additionally exploring alternative funding streams would reduce over reliance on a single source and strengthen financial resilience.

Another challenge that may arise for Forest Play and Explore are environmental factors and adverse weather conditions. As an outdoor provision the programme may be affected by heavy rainfall, high winds or high temperatures in the summer which can often mean playing outdoors is avoided (Oh, 2023). To overcome this challenge where possible parents will be reminded of appropriate clothing such as waterproofs and wellies and during the summer season reminded of hats and sunscreen. Where possible the service will also provide children's waterproof suits, wellies and sun hats for children when needed, however this does introduce further financial pressures again linking back to funding constraints.

As the sessions will be mainly run in the forest the children will be mostly covered by the natural shade from trees providing some protection from high temperatures. In addition, tarpaulin and rope will also be used to create a temporary shelter before the sessions begin ensuring a safer and more comfortable environment for everyone. It is important that weather is repeatedly monitored and risk assessments are carried out, as in extreme weather conditions it could become unsafe for the sessions to run (The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999). By implementing these measures, the programme can reduce the impact of environmental challenges.

If Forest Play and Explore proves successful, a key area for further development could be to extend the service so that it not only runs during the holidays but also runs during term time. This could include the option of delivering sessions after school or for children who have not reached compulsory school age yet. Expanding in this way could increase engagement and further promote outdoor play opportunities within the local community.

Another consideration for future development could be to work in partnership with local schools. For example, sessions could be delivered within existing school forest school areas, maximising the use of already established outdoor spaces which would reduce costs. Partnership working could also strengthen community links and allow for shared resources and joint planning.

Another opportunity could be to collaborate with Caerphilly Play Service, particularly by integrating sessions with their Food and Fun sessions as they already run at schools. Forest Play and Explore could contribute an outdoor play element to complement existing activities, creating a more holistic experience for children and families.

However, any expansion will rely on feedback and engagement from families and the availability of long-term funding.

In conclusion Forest Play and Explore provides meaningful support to families while promoting the key principles of early childhood development. The programme underpins the values of Caerphilly Play service and aligns closely with forest school ethos of child led outdoor learning. The programme embeds legislation and current policies within their practice and follows the Welsh guidance and framework demonstrating a commitment to high standards of quality, safety and inclusivity.

Although the programme relies heavily on funding and community engagement, if these issues are overcome Forest Play and Explore will be a success within Caerphilly County Borough and could even have the potential to be scalable within other local authorities in Wales.

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