



Intergenerational Childcare

Combining Day Care for Children
with Elderly People

My Business Idea

Jigsaw Intergenerational Child Care

My idea is to set up an intergenerational child care centre. The age range will start from 6 weeks up to 5 years. The name of the centre will be Jigsaw Intergenerational Child Care and will be located within the Cardiff area. It will offer children the opportunity to take part in carefully selected, supervised activities with senior citizens. It will be staffed by child care professionals trained in early learning programs and curricula. The aim is to provide a nurturing high quality, safe and fun learning environment that will contribute towards the child's overall growth and development.

The innovation behind my idea began when I watched a television programme on BBC One Wales *'The Toddlers Who Took on Dementia'* (BBC One Wales, 2018). The programme aired on 23rd May 2018 and was overseen by academics from Bangor University. It investigated an experiment in which a group of nursery children spent three days at a dementia day care centre. The impact on the elderly was mainly positive and the children now pay regular visits. This motivated me to carry out further research on the topic which I will expand upon later.

Business Structure

I am planning to set up the child care centre as a business partnership. My business partner, Michelle Campbell, has a first-class business degree, and has extensive business experience, including being a company director of a small to medium enterprise (SME).

The business will be structured and run as a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) and will be trading as Jigsaw Intergenerational Child Care (Government, 2018). I will take overall responsibility for the childcare operations such as inspections by CIW and ESTYN, however Michelle Campbell, my business partner, will take responsibility for the business functions, e.g. finance, marketing, human resources, health & safety etc.

Finance

Investment

We will both make a personal financial investment which will help pay towards the start-up costs: -

- Rent/mortgage
- Renovation costs (careful planning of space will be required as the two sectors will have very different needs, especially from a Health & Safety perspective)
- Capital equipment for planned activities
- Safety devices
- Licensing, inspections, insurance and legalities
- Wages
- Marketing
- Specialist consultation fees (H&S advice, risk assessments, solicitors, etc)
- Utilities
- IT
- Transportation

The business will charge a daily rate of £50-£60 per child. I will conduct extensive research on our competitors' charges, and what the market will tolerate within our catchment. I will adapt our pricing strategy to reflect the life-cycle of the business, offering an introductory rate and special opening offers, and when the business progresses, offering an advance-payment discount (e.g. pay for 3 months get 10% off).

Funding Streams

Other funding streams will be extensively explored and will include the following:

- National Lottery funding (National Lottery Funded, 2018) (Your National Lottery, 2018).
- Community Play funding (Inclusive Play Funding, 2018).
- Play Wales (Play Wales, 2018).

- Bank loan (based on a comprehensive business plan)
- Other investors (I would be mindful of the return, equity and conditions of allowing in other investors. This is not necessarily a negative issue, but legal advice would be important prior to making any commitments)

The plan is to contact Business Wales, which provides free independent advice for businesses, to help with funding sources. (Welsh Government, 2018).

Strategy

There would be a phased business strategy:

Find a commercial property for sale or lease preferably near a residential care home. Alternatively, convert a building, for example a house within a suitable residential area (Behrstock & Clifford, 2010). However, this would involve 'change of use' and possibly planning permission, and so further research would need to be conducted if a suitable building was located (Gabriella Jozwiak, 2013).

The next phase would be for children to make regular visits to the elderly at their care home, and in turn, the elderly visiting the children within their nursery. This could initially be done weekly, with visits gradually increasing.

The long-term strategy would be to relocate the centre within the care home. This would involve finding out if the care home has unused available space that would lend itself for conversion, or a new build to create co-located intergenerational space.

Stakeholders

The main stakeholders would consist of the following: -

- Children (6 weeks - 5 years)
- Care-home residents
- Staff
- Communities
- Schools
- Residential Care Homes & Nurseries
- Local authorities
- Inspectorate bodies (e.g. Care Inspectorate Wales and H&S assessors etc)

- Government (central and local)
- Policy makers (MP's, AM's etc)
- Planners, developers, architects
- Funders

I will expand upon the advantages and disadvantages of some of these stakeholders throughout the research element of the business plan.

Marketing and Research

The type of service provided is not a new concept in other countries (see business plan). However, as far as the UK is concerned, it is still quite a new childcare model (Billing, 2003). Therefore, our service does have a unique selling proposition (USP). The USP can create advantages and disadvantages, e.g. people tend to be cautious of something new, particularly when it involves the care of their child (leading to our phased approach). So, it is important that our marketing material contains the advantages of intergenerational childcare (e.g. enhances quality of life for participants, improves attitude towards different age groups, and provides a service to the community (Armstrong, 2002).

Our marketing will involve:

- Advertising on social media – Facebook page, advertising through parental groups on social media, interactive website
- Mass marketing – distribution of leaflets within residential and commercial properties within surrounding areas
- Local radio advertising – relevant times to target parents when they are driving their children to and from school/childcare
- Advertising in ante-natal classes
- Promotional stands within local businesses (e.g. supermarkets)
- Press releases to attract media attention
- Local television advertising (expensive but could be considered if within our budget plan)
- Large billboards
- Local newspapers and magazines

I will undertake extensive market research to determine the demand for our service, initially by speaking to parents, for example, when parents bring and collect their children, I would ask them to complete a questionnaire. I would also arrange additional discussions with groups of interested parents, planned to accommodate their schedules. I would subsequently include other parents not immediately involved with the setting.

Generally, the marketing will need to reach parents, and it is vital that we get our message across to this segment. We will need to inform parents of the benefits of our service, and how successful it has been worldwide, and how the UK views this as a way forward in childcare services.

Lesson Planning

In 2017 an intergenerational childcare report was compiled by Lorraine George, a childcare worker from Torquay. Lorraine received a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship award, allowing her to travel to the USA to conduct research on this topic. She suggested that lesson planning is vital for intergenerational childcare, as there needs to be a structure for all parties to be clear about their objectives and responsibilities, so that an opportunity is created to build relationships, enabling each person to benefit from the shared experience. Therefore, our business is planning to follow the framework of the national curriculum, aiming to achieve best practice and quality early years development.

Research Behind the Idea

Origins

Intergenerational exchanges between diverse groups like children and the elderly is not an entirely new concept - it originated in Japan during the 1970s with Shimada Masaharu, who trialled the merging of a nursery and a care home for the elderly on a single site in Edogawa Ward, Tokyo in 1976. At that time Masaharu was unaware of the worldwide attention his idea attracted, and by 1998 sixteen intergeneration facilities were operating in Tokyo (Justine Matchett, 2017).

International

USA & Canada

During 1998 similar facilities across the USA and Canada were being developed. The Canadian Ministry for Health, Labour and Welfare revealed that the intergenerational concept had spread to other similar facilities and countries (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2018). This can be corroborated by the several hundred intergenerational childcare centres across these two countries, where childcare and senior centres share a building within the care home facility or are co-located on the same site (Lucy Rock, 2017).

In Seattle, a nursery for children aged between the ranges of six weeks to five years is co-located on the campus of Providence Mount St Vincent, a care home that houses over 400 elderly people. The children are taken to visit the residents of the care home and in turn, the elderly pay visits to the nursery. A structured programme of activities is followed, including sing-alongs, cooking and crafts. This has been a resounding success and is a centre of excellence within USA (Providence Health & Services, 2018).

Singapore

Over the next decade Singapore is planning to provide 10 intergenerational facilities as part of a \$1.69 billion national plan. Singapore is also targeting existing care homes to introduce children into their care facilities, allowing these two generations to interact (Sue-Ann Tan, 2017).

Australia

Australia has also been partaking in the intergenerational childcare model for the last ten years. They have been holding sessions for babies and toddlers from Playgroup Victoria, along with carers and the elderly at the residents Geelong's Bupa Bellarine Aged Care Centre. Although there is some resistance compared to other countries, the concept is gaining momentum (Social Care Foundation Australia, 2017).

Europe

In Europe, Germany already adopts a similar approach: The *Mehrgenerationenhaus*. This is a multigenerational house that operates as a kindergarten, a social centre for

the elderly and somewhere for young families to visit for advice and coffee. The *Mehrgenerationenhaus* was established in Lower Saxony in 2003 by Ursula von der Leyen. At that time Ursula was the region's family minister. Later she became the federal defence minister which provided her with a platform to advocate her idea, and as a result, 500 centres across the country were established and assigned an annual budget of €40,000 euros (Philip Oltermann, 2014).

UK

In 2017 Stephen Burke, Director of United for All Ages (UAA) published a paper called 'Fairness for All Ages' which suggested ways in which intergenerational fairness could be promoted and is being discussed at government level.

Burke also pioneered a think-tank and social enterprise; whose aim is to develop an 'all ages' approach to social and economic policy. UAA have been meeting with nursery groups, care providers for the elderly and local authorities, promoting the idea of co-location between these two sectors, and whilst it is recognised that some care homes invite children from nurseries within their vicinity for visits, this is still a minority approach. UAA's intention is that co-location and the intergenerational concept is embraced as part of everyday life. UAA recognise that this is likely to be a slow and somewhat lengthy process; however, there is evidence that some operators are implementing the idea of intergenerational care (Justine Matchett, 2017).

Denise Burke, co-director of United for All Ages has recently mentioned in a report that the ambition for UAA is for 500 shared sites by the end of 2022. She also alludes to the fact that there are 75,000 care homes, nurseries and schools within the UK, and that this provides a massive scope for accomplishing the ambition.

Advantages

The UK is currently trailing behind other countries, but at least the topic of intergenerational childcare is being debated and slowly implemented in the country, as these examples show:

Busy Bees nursery in Chichester is located next to the Anchor care home. They are working in a collaborative partnership with Torbay Council in Devon to develop an intergenerational care site (Parenta, 2017).

Apples and Honey Nursery (AHN) have been embracing the intergenerational concept since 1991 in their Wimbledon nursery. This involved the children making two visits a term to a nearby care home. This proved to be very successful, and in September 2017 AHN opened a co-located nursery at Nightingale House, which is based on the grounds of the elderly care home in Wandsworth. This is thought to be the first co-located nursery within the UK with planned inclusive activities. The nursery will have its own garden area, and residents will help the children plant. There will also be a pet corner with guinea pigs and rabbits (Lorraine George, 2017).

Downshall Primary School in Essex has taken a slightly different approach. Up to nine elderly visitors attend the school three days a week, accompanied by their support workers. The visitors have a separate room, where they socialise amongst themselves, and where the children can come to play. In addition, the elderly spend 20-minute sessions across three classrooms, carrying out activities with four and five-year olds that fit within the framework of the national curriculum (Sally Weale, 2017).

Other approaches have included nurseries undertaking experimental visits to care homes. For example, an experiment in Wales filmed for a television documentary, *Hen Blant Bach*, took a group of six children (aged 3 and under) from Plant Parciau nursery in Caernarfon, to spend 3 consecutive days at Maesincla Daycare Centre. The experiment was overseen by academics from Bangor University, and activities comprised of making hats, decorating cakes, and sharing stories and photographs. The outcome generated a positive reaction, and Dr Nia Williams, a part-time lecturer and researcher in the field of child psychology at Bangor University, verified that a video on Facebook had been watched 50,000 times. (Charlotte Goddard, 2017). As with any new concept, Dr Williams acknowledges there are challenges to overcome, but the overall enthusiasm has been encouraging.

The challenges and benefits will now be discussed:

One of the benefits of intergenerational interactions were soon realised - the elderly did not feel so secluded. Their motivation increased, and they interacted with each other more frequently. This brought about health benefits in comparison to the elderly who were non-participants in the programme, e.g. reduced blood pressure, improved mental health, increased mobility, and an overall reduction in disease and mortality (Park, 2014).

The children developed an understanding of the elderly and became more respectful, their social skills improved, they became more socially aware and their personal development was enhanced. (Miliband, 2004).

In 2000 the BBC reported that for every 100 people working within the childcare sector, only two are men. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) carried out further research and questioned 1,000 parents about this issue. Findings revealed that 59% of respondents declared that not a single male was employed at the nurseries to which they sent their child. The CWDC articulates that it is essential for pre-school children to have regular contact with a responsible male adult as it provides them with a diverse and enriched experience (Kent, 2005).

Reverting to the experiment carried out at Plant Parciau nursery in Caernarfon, Dr Williams observed the interaction between the children and men at the day care centre. She identified that children respond to male attention, as there is a significant difference in the way men and women interact and play with children. She believes that male interaction helps children further develop their independence (Charlotte Goddard, 2017). Therefore, this supports the discussion that the gap in male childcare staff can be fulfilled through the intergenerational childcare model, and that the sense of independence the children gain is beneficial to their development.

The Legacy Project (LP) is based in Toronto, Canada. They are an independent, research, learning and social innovation group that carries out extensive research on intergenerational connections with participants across the world. They have an extensive Advisory Board consisting of CEOs of large corporations, education consultants, professors of community engagement, barristers, solicitors, and doctors that brings a wealth of knowledge, expertise and ideas to the intergenerational field. (Legacy Project, 2016)

The LP recognises the positive connotations of intergenerational childcare. Their research revealed that for children to fully develop on an emotional and social level they need four to six caring adults in their lives. The LP's research also revealed that children are subject to high levels of peer pressure to connect through social media contact, texting and computers etc. They do not receive sufficient one-on-one quality time with responsible mature adults. Generally, when children are mentored by such adults, they develop an increased level of self-esteem and confidence, and this

can have a direct impact on better grades throughout their education (Susan Bosak, 2016).

From a purely economic standpoint, the wider benefits of combining these sectors can significantly reduce operating costs, especially that they are underfunded within the UK. For example, rent and staff accounts for 95% of expenditure at care facilities. However, adopting a shared approach could be hugely beneficial to the UK, where health care relies heavily on public money (The Conversation, 2017).

Disadvantages/Challenges

There are of course challenges facing intergenerational childcare. For instance, the residential home for the elderly is better equipped to receive children than the nursery is for the elderly to visit. Co-location could assist with resolving this issue, but this may be expensive as it could involve a new build or significant refurbishment to existing buildings (Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Facility, 2002).

There are also uncertainties about safeguarding, for these two groups. Immune systems are vulnerable for the young and old alike, causing health issues (Charlotte Goddard, 2017).

At the moment, specific staff training for intergenerational childcare does not exist in the UK. Reverting to Lorraine George's report, the USA also experienced this. As a result, staff training had to be carried out in-house through the process of trial and error. The lack of this provision does not pose a significant disadvantage, but it is an issue the UK will have to address if intergenerational childcare is to be established, as these two groups have very different needs, and staff will need training to coincide with this (Lorraine George, 2017)

There is also a concern about the likelihood of the elderly residents dying, as this could leave children with the feeling of insecurity and trauma. At some point children learn about death and their own mortality, but the intergenerational childcare model does increase the chances of children having to deal with this on more than one occasion (Mary-Kate Leahy, 2016).

Any day-care facility for children or adults is likely to cause increased concerns around Health & Safety. Adults will need to be DBS checked to ensure children are in

a safe environment as parents are likely to have questions about their child's safety that will need to be addressed by staff in a knowledge and professional manner. Health & Safety policies and risk assessments must be put in place as a priority (Megan Clarke, 2018).

Lastly, intergenerational childcare will have varying needs, for example, care inspections will differ, and will be subject to separate inspections. Again, this is not a distinct disadvantage, but it is another challenge that will need to be addressed (Stephen Burke, 2017).

Conclusion

The intergenerational childcare model does not create insurmountable challenges. It has evidently worked in other countries, and it appears the UK does have an appetite for this type of initiative. The structure of the intergenerational model is simple, relatively easy to implement, and therefore, highly flexible across cultural deviations. It could address the focus in the UK around social mobility, break down intergenerational stereotypes, and bring different generations together. It would be prudent to take a phased approach with the aim of increasing the chances of acceptance and success.

As far as Jigsaw Intergenerational Childcare is concerned, once we have established ourselves as a successful business, we would offer a consultancy service to other childcare centres, as our experience of starting up our own service, would provide us with valuable knowledge and expertise within this field. We would also offer a training service, e.g. staff training, Health & Safety, marketing, lesson planning and obtaining finance etc. These services would add to our business portfolio and go towards a successful sustainable forward-thinking business.

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