

ECEY6012

Leadership skills and entrepreneurship.

I acknowledge the use of Chat GBT on the 5th February 2026 to design my business logo.

I used the prompt:

Design me a logo for business idea called Zen Den. I want it to look like a teepee with calm colours.

I confirm I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work.

I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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Part A

Zen Den

A cosy family connection
space

When was the last time you truly sat down and listened to your child?

Not while cooking dinner.

Not while tidying their room.

Not while glancing at a phone.

But really listened without distractions, without rushing and without the noise of everyday life.

In today's fast paced, screen driven world meaningful conversations between parents and children are becoming increasingly rare. Life pulls us in a hundred directions at once and too often our children hear, "*Just a minute,*" and speak to us while our attention is elsewhere. Those quiet moments of connection, the moments that build trust, confidence and emotional safety are slowly being lost. I found myself reflecting on my own childhood, a time before social media, screens and constant digital noise. I remembered sitting with my mum talking, colouring, playing or reading together, simple moments that felt natural and unhurried. As I thought about those memories I began to compare them with my relationship with my own daughter. It made me pause and question when family life changed so drastically. How did this become our new normal? And why did we, as parents, not notice the shift as it quietly took hold?

This reflection led
me to Zen Den.

Who Are We?

Zen Den is a cosy family connection space for families designed to strengthen relationships and encourage deep meaningful conversations between parents and their children. The Zen Den will offer a calm nurturing environment where distractions are intentionally removed and connection is placed at the centre. This concept is backed by Bowlby's Attachment Theory (cited in Holmes, 2014) and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, both of which underscore the crucial importance of safety, affection and connection in early development. Bowlby highlights that stable, consistent and responsive interactions with primary caregivers give children a sense of emotional security, while Maslow considers love and belonging to be vital human necessities. Collectively, these theories indicate that children who develop secure attachments are more likely to cultivate emotional resilience, self-confidence and the ability to create healthy relationships in later life. Zen Den is based on these theories and is underpinned by UNICEF (2019) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [hereafter UNCRC] articles 3 and 13 that state children must be the priority and their best interests must come first and that they have the right to share their thoughts and opinions freely.

There will be one rule.....No handheld devices allowed!!

Parents and children leave them behind before entering allowing families to fully unplug from the outside world and tune into each other. The den will be peaceful, safe and grounding. A place where families can return to basics, where children feel heard, valued and actively listened to. Zen Den offers families something increasingly rare, uninterrupted time. Time to sit together, talk openly and reconnect. This business is built on a simple but powerful belief that when children feel truly listened to they thrive. Zen Den aims to give families the space to slow down, be present and rediscover the power of meaningful conversation.

Benefits of Zen Den?

Zen Den would benefit children in the early years by offering them a place be themselves where they can build secure and more caring relationships with their parents. Zen Den also aims to support children's language and social skills by listening and taking part in meaningful conversations.

This approach supports the whole child by developing their emotional wellbeing and communication and is underpinned by the Welsh Government (2024) and the Curriculum for Wales that highlights the importance of wellbeing and communication putting emphasis on positive relationships.

Zen Den aims to create positive social value by strengthening families and communities. It will aim to enhance communication, emotional connection and social skills. Zen Den will do this by offering a space to reduce conflict through talking and promote participation, belonging and collective well-being across the wider community. Zen Den aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological approach which suggests that supporting families at the microsystem and mesosystem levels can positively impact the wider community. Zen Den puts this theory into practice and highlights how different systems work together and influence both a child's development and the wider community.

Strengths



Zen Den's key strength lies in addressing a clear and growing social need, rising screen dependency and reduced family connection. According to the UK Parliament (2024) and the Department for Education (2026) screen time has become a normal part of daily life for children. Research indicates that children's screen use increased by 52% between 2020 and 2022 with exposure beginning as early as six months of age. The World Health Organisation (2019) recommends that children aged two to four limit screen time to one hour per day. Despite this, many children now own mobile devices at a very young age, with one in five children aged three to four having their own device. Research also shows that children aged five to fifteen are spending significantly more time online, highlighting how quickly screens have become a routine part of childhood. Zen Den aims to offer a solution to this widely recognised issue and responds directly by offering an environment that intentionally removes screens and prioritises meaningful interaction. Furthermore, It uses personal experience to create a strong emotional connection with parents while promoting a purpose driven approach focused on wellbeing, mental health and mindful parenting.

Challenges for Zen Den

Getting parents and children to attend regularly

Getting parents to participate with busy schedules

Parents unsure of the benefits of Zen Den

Parents not wanting to be involved with the schools or worried they will be judged.

Parents own attitudes towards mental health

To address these challenges, it is important that Zen Den clearly communicates the value and the benefits for the children and their families, offer flexible timing and find ways to encourage parental involvement with things such as attendance incentives to help ensure children benefit from the service.

Financials

Zen Den will run as a registered social enterprise. Yilmaz and Yilmaz (2019) explain that social enterprises can make a profit. However, they must also act responsibly and use some of their money to support social causes. Zen Den reflects the idea of blended value and will aim to create economic, social and environmental value at the same time. As a social enterprise, Zen Den will seek to address social needs and create positive change for families.

My audience would be parents and children across South Wales. I will share my business idea with local authorities to collaborate with them and offer Zen Den to schools in the local area. The cost of Zen Den will be £300 for the use of 10 teepees for 3 hour long drop in sessions where families can stay for as long or as little as they want. I will apply for funding to start my business from Business Finance Wales (no date) where I would be eligible for up to £2500 to help with the initial cost of the teepees and marketing. Below is a cashflow document for the first 2 years of Zen Den. The first year is based on one session per week which totals £13,600, the second year is based on two sessions per week. I have decided not to take a wage in the first year and plan to run Zen Den alongside my current job. However, year two shows that I plan to take a wage as I take on more sessions.

	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4
<u>Income (money coming in)*</u>				
Sales	£15,600	£31,200		
Personal Investment	0	0		
TOTAL INCOME	£15,600	£31,200		
<u>Costs (money going out)*</u>				
Other: (R&D?)				
Wages	0	£12,000		
Drawings	0			
Rent	0			
Computer	0			
Initial equipment	£1000			
Electricity	0			
Telephone	0			
Marketing	£1000	£1000		

Ingredients/ other				
other				
other				
other				
TOTAL COSTS	£2000	£13,000		
NET CASHFLOW*	£13,600	£18,200		
GROSS Cashflow				
<u>Opening Balance*</u>	£15,600	£15,600		
<u>Closing Balance*</u>	£13,600	£33,800		

Why Zen Den?

I truly believe that Zen Den has the potential to make a lasting positive difference in the lives of the families it supports. With my professional background in early years practice and my degree in education and care I bring both academic knowledge and hands on experience in child development. I understand what children need to thrive and how powerful strong parent and child connections are in shaping their future. Furthermore, countries such as Australia have already put a social media ban for children under 16's and The Intentional Parent (2026) state Sweden have just announced they plan to take away screens in schools for children and plan to invest in books and pens after seeing how screens have a negative impact on children. Zen Den seems to be on trend and is ready to go.

My motivation is not only professional but personal. I carry vivid memories of meaningful moments from my own childhood, where moments of connection and belonging have shaped who I am today. I am passionate about supporting families to break the cycle of disconnection and create intentional joyful experiences together. With my knowledge and genuine enthusiasm I am confident that I am well placed to launch and lead Zen Den successfully.

Part B

Zen Den's embedded approach to communication and early childhood development can be supported by theorist Maslow (1943) and his Hierarchy of Needs which states children must have their basic needs met before they can learn and develop fully. These basic needs include safety, security and feelings of connection. Maslow suggests children who feel secure and connected to their parents will be more confident and ready to explore and learn. Similarly, Bowlby's Attachment Theory (cited in Holmes, 2014) states children need strong secure relationships with their parents or caregivers and suggests that these close bonds help children feel safe and supported allowing them to reach important developmental milestones. Both theories support Zen Den's focus on building strong relationships and promoting positive communication in the early years. Wang (2023) maintains children in the early years grow and develop fast and states during this time the family has a big influence on children's wellbeing and suggests creating a positive home environment with supportive and communicative parents can help children develop in a healthy way. The author's study showed that when children talk and interact with parents and caregivers they learn how to express their feelings and form relationships and points out that these early experiences create the foundation for their future emotional and social development. This concept is backed by Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological System theory which states that a children develop within different layers of their environment and states the closest and most important layer is the family or the microsystem. The theorist points out that everyday communication at home strongly influences their growth and suggests that when parents communicate in a warm, supportive and consistent way children are more likely to develop strong language skills, positive social behaviour, emotional security and better overall development. This aligns with the Welsh Government (2024) and the Curriculum for Wales which places the child at the centre of learning. They state by providing rich environments and strong relationships children will be supported to develop communication holistically using all pathways and points out that learning happens through meaningful experiences and connections across home, school and the wider community. Zen Den aims to excel in this area by supporting children's cognitive and emotional development through communication.

According to Lawton *et al.* (2023) early and frequent use of child directed speech and conversational turn taking by parents and caregivers supports children's future cognitive and academic development and should be encouraged at home and in educational settings. UNICEF (no date) would agree and suggests parents can actively listen to their child by getting to their eye level, smiling, nodding and asking simple questions. They claim this will allow children to feel heard, safe and confident while developing their communication skills. Additionally, reflective listening and repeating children's words helps show understanding and encourages them to express their thoughts and feelings more freely (Welsh Government, 2024). At the same time, communication that is light hearted and playful is most effective for children's development. This approach will be central to Zen Den, creating a fun and welcoming environment where parents can engage in meaningful conversation and children can enjoy exploring and playing in their own exciting den. The National Health Service [hereafter NHS] (2022) suggests parents can support their children by talking with them and discuss how they might be feeling and states this positive interaction can promote good mental health. In the same vein, Ark (2020) highlights the importance of adopting a whole-family approach where high quality interactions between adults and children and points out that these moments of connection are more crucial than ever. Zen Den aims to support these findings by creating a safe space for close and meaningful interaction, where children can talk openly to their parents or caregivers about what may be worrying them and support mental health.

In support of Zen Dens no screen policy, according to Massaroni *et al.* (2024) excessive screen time in the early years can negatively affect children's cognitive and language development, particularly in areas such as attention, social interaction, problem-solving and conversational skills. The authors state studies found that prolonged passive screen time particularly television reduces children's verbal activity and increases the risk of language delay. They point out that children who watched TV without parental interaction were over eight times more likely to experience delayed language development and claim those watching more than four hours a day were at even greater risk. Similarly, Muppalla and Vuppalapato (2023) highlight that excessive screen time can limit both the quality and quantity of interactions between children and caregivers negatively impacting language development. They also note that excessive screen time may harm social and

emotional growth, increasing the risk of obesity, sleep problems, anxiety, depression and aggressive behaviour. Zen Den's no screen policy reflects these concerns emphasising the benefits of reduced screen time for children and their families.

However, even with clear benefits Early Intervention Foundation (2019) suggests research shows that many families face barriers such as limited access, not enough information, social isolation or services that don't feel right for them which stop them from using support programs. They suggest those who could benefit the most are often the least likely to get help and point out that if these issues are not addressed many families and children will miss out on the support they need. In the same vein, according to NSPCC (2024) and Public Health Wales (2025) families can experience stigma when they reach out for support and suggest many parents fear being judged and worry that disclosing concerns will lead others to question their mental health and ability to care for their child. To address these barriers Zen Den aims to offer an unstructured and informal space and create a space where families can interact freely without the feeling of being watched or judged, allowing families to just be themselves and relax with no pressure helping to reduce the feelings of embarrassment or stigma.

Another challenge for Zen Den is getting parents to attend the sessions regularly. Some parents may feel unsure about being involved with the school or may not understand why early help is important. According to the Welsh Government (2021) some parents may be uncertain about the benefits of engaging with school-based support and therefore feel unmotivated to participate. Research suggests that while some families believe their children are too young to require early intervention, others may not fully understand the importance of these services or the positive impact they can have on their child's development. Little *et al.* (2016) would agree and points out that some families may be hesitant to accept support because they feel uncomfortable and are unwilling to acknowledge possible developmental delays or do not fully understand the benefits of early intervention. Furthermore, Action for Children (2021) explains that parental engagement can be influenced by attitudes towards mental health, wellbeing and cultural beliefs. Their research also highlights that parents from lower income families are more likely to experience difficulties accessing support with almost half reporting challenges even when services are available. To respond to this Zen Den will clearly explain the benefits, provide flexible

session times and introduce strategies such as attendance incentives to encourage parental involvement and help children gain the greatest benefit from the programme. To encourage participation and shed light on early intervention the Welsh Government (2023) offer resources to practitioners that can be passed to families to help them with communication.

Zen Den aligns with the Welsh Government (2022) community focused school's approach as it aims to build strong partnerships with families and work collaboratively with other services. The Government states that every child, family and community has strengths to build upon and suggest by working in partnership they aim to identify solutions that meet the individual needs of each learner and their family. Furthermore, Zen Den aligns well with schools' open door policies as the sessions will be delivered at schools in the Swansea area. ESTYN (2020) states the importance of schools working in partnership with the community to strengthen family engagement and claims open door policies allow parents and caregiver to feel part of the school community by being made to feel welcome in an inclusive environment. Collectively, these policies highlight the importance of early intervention and family engagement in supporting children's development providing a policy framework for initiatives such as Zen Den.

In conclusion, Zen Den demonstrates a strong evidence based approach to supporting early childhood development, family engagement and positive communication. Looking ahead, there are opportunities to expand Zen Den beyond the Swansea area and implement the programme across Wales allowing more schools and communities to benefit from its approach. Additional possibilities could include developing partnerships with local health boards and social services offering specialised workshops for parents. By expanding and adapting Zen Den schools across Wales could receive a network of welcoming communication spaces where children and families can connect, share and develop together promoting early intervention, wellbeing and meaningful engagement.

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