



Our 30-hour journey so far:



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Appy Little Plums is a family run nursery is based in Westleigh within the Wigan borough, it is owned by Dave & Vicky Halliwell.

Appy Little Plums opened in January 2015 and is open all year round from 06:30 – 18:00 5 days per week.

On 16th December 2016 Appy Little Plums Day Nursery amongst other local day nurseries were invited to a briefing, this briefing was around the delivery of piloting the “30-hour free childcare” in preparation for September 2017.

All nurseries within our cluster were informed at this briefing that delivery of this pilot was to commence 09/01/2017 (4 weeks from briefing date).



Our 30-hour journey so far:

- As you can imagine this was extremely daunting and created some additional pressure and had to be managed carefully, especially with Christmas around the corner and our term time children finishing within a week.
- After discussion, it was agreed within our setting that we would need to prioritise all information and contact all parents, feeding them full of information to establish if they would be eligible and if they were interested in taking up the offer.
- It was quickly established that 13 of our existing parents were indeed eligible and requested to participate.
- Some of these parents already attended our setting full time privately topping up, others requested the additional 15 hours.

Delivery



- Prior to agreeing with parents on session times or any delivery models the management team sat and discussed how we could accommodate the additional hours and was there any mileage in stretching the funding for parents that may prefer.
- With the support of information from our local authority this made things easier for the parental discussions.
- Models discussed were as follows



Delivery

- Extended session times as below or stretched funding through the whole year.
- 07:00 – 12:00
- 12:00 – 17:00
- 07:00 – 17:00

- Each parent was invited into a small meeting separately to discuss their requirements and preferences, every parent was appreciative and fully understood what was about to happen.
- All parents were informed that it was our intention to run a first come first served system.



Delivery

- We decided to give all ideas a good chance and saw the next 6 months as a huge learning curve and a massive part of our business planning going forward.
- In addition to the above sessions we also kept our original funding hours between 9am – 3pm.
- From the 13 parents, there were as follows
- 2 Parents undertook the stretched offer (7am – 5pm)
- 7 parents stuck with the original 9-3 offer
- 4 parents were to stick with their original days but extend the number of hours per day. (3 days extended hours)



Delivery

- This was monitored closely and when April approached we were in more comfortable position having the same conversations with further eligible parents.
- Throughout the spring term a further 6 of our children became eligible and took up further funded hours with us.
- The additional 6 were split as follows.
- 2 parents undertook term time 9-3
- 1 parent stretched 9-3 sessions
- 3 parents used 20 hours per week over the year (all 3 parents were full time private paying)

Delivery



- Through our trial period to date we have not had any parent with a change in circumstances forcing them into the grace period.
- All children that attend for 30 hour funding at present do not share with another provider.
- Going forward we will be working in partnership as a cluster within our local startwell, this will encourage settings to share best practice and also discuss ideas.
- Initial letters (15/05/2017) have been sent out to our parents in relation to the HMRC Online Application, no parent has yet responded with any feed back.



Initial Pressures

- Having to inform some existing parents that we were unable to accommodate.
- Short Timescales to make business decisions.
- Uncertainty around session times.
- Unable to accommodate new clients due to space.
- Increase in staff and staff hours which results in higher salary payments.
- Minimum wage increased in April and further planned increases.
- Impact on other parts of the business I.E. Afterschool provision due to extended hours.
- Additional paperwork to support placements.



Parent Feedback

- TF Parents, Both working parents who were privately paying for 3 full days, TF turned 3 in December 2016 so was immediately eligible for the 30 hour pilot.
- Parent feedback was that they cannot believe how much this makes a difference to their finances as they were discussing reducing hours once TF was entitled to his first 15, this eases the pressure not just financially but with grandparents that had been lined up to collect from nursery.
- NK, Parents both work full time, Mum – Nights, Dad – Days, NK and younger sibling attend nursery 5 days per week for the full year, NK parents have chosen to stretch their funding through the year which reduces their monthly childcare bill. Mum commented that they are to save approximately £2200 per year due to this entitlement.
- OJ mum is a single parent and was not sure if she was eligible, the criteria was shown to her and it was decided to stretch the hours 2 days per week through the year. Mum was amazed to learn that her childcare bill was reduced down to £8 per week and commented that she didn't feel like she was paying enough. This has however encouraged mum to apply for extra hours at work.

Success



- Higher funding rate for all hours not just additional, this helped ease the impact on minimum wage increases.
- Consistency for our children giving them more educational time in setting thus increasing their chances of development to be school ready.
- Increased revenue from the LA.
- Parent reduction in private fees.
- Child stability.
- Working parents appreciation.
- Created a robust relationship between settings and Local Authorities, without our LA none of this would have been deliverable.



Looking Forward

- Looking forward beyond September the 30 hour scheme we believe will continue to benefit the working parent and encourage our children to succeed with the additional time spent.
- I would encourage everyone to look at various business models before making any decisions as your setting has to work financially for you.
- As a business we are currently looking to run all 3 models into the school year 17-18, this will however depend on the outcome of our next scheduled meeting with eligible parents in June. Questionnaires will be produced prior to this which will give an idea of their thoughts around sessions.
- Staff shift patterns will need to be looked at dependent on the response from parent questionnaires.
- Possibility of longer opening hours should the demand be there until 8pm.
- Looking to obtain additional space to further support the demand of 30 hours.
- **Don't be afraid to change, some models will not work for all settings.**

September 2017



Key Messages

- In September we all need to be as ready as can be, communication with parents is an absolute key part of this.
- Ensure that you keep in good contact with your LA as key messages will likely be passed through them first.