



Early Years



Out of
School
Care



Indi
Youth



Mobile
Creche



2021

Business Development Plan

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Introduction

Indigo Childcare is a well-respected Childcare organisation, operating currently in Castlemilk and Garrowhill in Glasgow, widely recognised as a provider of innovative high-quality childcare at affordable prices.

In the last four years Indigo have focused on strengthening the foundations of the business, positioning ourselves for future growth, and to make real and lasting impact on our families and communities, by:

- Reinforcing the quality of our offer
- Strengthening our financial position to ensure we build on solid foundations,
- Securing funding to test out new service ideas
- Promoting collaboration locally and nationally to address child, family and community issues
- ReadyIng Indigo for key national initiatives: Childcare Expansion; Language and Communications programmes, Resilience Initiatives
- Building a national reputation for leadership in the field, influencing national and local policy
- And in the last year, flexing everything to address immediate challenges faced by communities during Lockdown

Our Mission

Indigo exists to empower families to overcome poverty and its challenges through the provision of innovative, family informed, learning and childcare solutions from birth to 16yrs.

The Indigo Experience

The Indigo Experience is carefully designed by our professional experts to meet the needs and interests of our families within their communities. It is focused on achieving outstanding quality and success with families and sets out what families and stakeholders can expect from Indigo, with 8 connected strands:

- Unique, creative, high-quality learning and childcare from 0-16yrs
- Nurturing and inspiring environments
- Inclusiveness – Indigo, a place for all Children and Young People
- Growing leaders - leadership at every level is evident the youngest child to the eldest member of staff
- Loving Language – recognising the crucial nature of strong and articulate communications in achieving exceptional attainment levels.
- Numbers Count – a focus on numeracy focus from the earliest stages
- Family Matters – A whole family approach recognising that positive outcomes for individual children rely on positive outcomes for families.
- Resilient Communities – Indigo’s approach to systemic change in our communities, supporting understanding of trauma informed practice and its value to all families and working collaboratively to influence the positive



Purpose of this Plan

This business plan features our planned development over the next 3 years, from April 2021 to March 2024. Our approach to the business plan has been steered by the following principles:

- Achieving clarity in terms of our vision and strategic direction
- Ensuring the plan is demand-based, reflecting the children, young people, families and communities we serve
- Providing a framework around which the Indigo Group can be developed, using existing activity as a springboard for future growth
- Developing a realistic business model through accurate forecasting of costs and a prudent approach to projecting income – bearing in mind market conditions, and uncertainty created through Covid 19

What Drives Indigo, and The Work We Do



Indigo is widely recognised at both local and national levels as a provider of Innovative high-quality childcare at affordable prices – and we want to maintain that.

The world we inhabit is complex and our work has to take account of this. There are a number of strategies, policies, regulations, new developments in the Early Learning and Childcare sector that present both opportunities and challenges.

We also have to take account of, and engage with, a vast number of Stakeholders, every one representing opportunities to collaborate and improve life chances and opportunities for children, young people and their families

The PESTEL Diagram (Policy, Economy, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal) on the next page sets out just how complex the structure around Early Learning and Childcare is and more widely children's services. It summarises what influences how we plan for the future, and how we deliver from day to day, and intends to offer an overview of all the factors we take into account when doing this.

For further Information, a more detailed list of policies and initiatives impacting on our work is set out in Appendix 1.

The Collaboration Section following this, sets out the range of Stakeholders we interact with.



Our Vision

All children and young people can experience outstanding quality learning and childcare experiences, that inspire and nurture, wherever they live, whatever their background.

This Vision is based on three principles:

Ambition

Our families need Indigo to reach for what others may believe impossible to achieve the equity and futures our families and communities deserve. We aim to nurture ambition and create conditions where they can be fulfilled, using our influence locally and nationally as agents of change. We will collaborate with communities, policymakers, government to do this; we will foster leadership, resilience and innovation. We will be brave.

Growth

Building on our current offers in Castlemilk and Garrowhill, and promoting 'The Indigo Experience', we will increase our reach by extending into new geographies in the West of Scotland. There is no time like the present – Early Years Expansion means significant opportunities are imminent to replicate The Indigo Experience in new communities.

Aspiration

Paving the Way to Excellence: We want to be recognised as a trusted brand of national repute which develops, showcases and celebrates the very best of Early Learning and Childcare, fuelled by resilient communities, strong partnerships and whole family approaches. In doing so, we will draw inspiration from children, families, experts, national and international best practice. Indigo Childcare will offer an energising fusion of innovative learning and achievement, sector-leading staff, and award-winning environments, building loyal customers and changing lives.

Values, Themes and Aspirations Underpinning Our Work

This section looks at what sits behind our actions:

- The Values which drive our everyday delivery
- The Themes which make us brave
- The Long Game – Our Ten-Year Aspirations



The Values Which Drive Our Everyday Delivery



Family-Centred: Children, young people and their families will be at the heart of every decision we make



Nurturing: We will nurture every child, family, team member and community to help achieve their fullest potential



Fun: Our team's happiness is infectious and will create a welcoming and fun experience for every Indigo stakeholder.



Inspiring: Inspiring our children, young people and families to be ambitious, curious in learning and to always wonder just what might be possible if...



Innovative: We will always ask our families and communities what they want and use this with our professional expertise to create transformational solutions

Growth: Outstanding Childcare, Accessible to More Families

Objective: outstanding childcare is accessible to more families

We will do this through:

- Consolidating our current services and creating new ones
- Reaching more children and families in Castlemilk through market penetration for existing services and by offering a new service at weekends;
- Seeking opportunities to expand services to new geographies
- Targeting affluent markets, using surpluses to re-invest in communities facing poverty

Strengths

- We have 3-year funding in place as a strong financial foundation from which to grow
- Our commitment to ensure every child and young person has access to an outstanding quality learning and childcare experience
- A supportive political climate for early years with guaranteed funding commitments
- Indigo's strengthened financial position
- The success of Garrowhill Nursery Pilot
- The Indigo Experience - Our Unique Model for achieving the best outcomes for children and their families - is flexible so that we can tailor our work to meet the needs of any community, whatever its demographic.

Opportunities

- Partnership with Craighalbert – Scottish Centre - to open inclusive nursery provision
- Potential takeover opportunities, one currently in exploration.
- 6 new nursery leases going out to tender by Glasgow City Council in next two years
- Exploration of purchase of existing nursery businesses that may come up for sale, ideally with property.
- And through this, develop a model of wealth distribution, where surpluses from affluent locations are used to ensure equality in less affluent areas.

Risks

- The pandemic is a very real issue that places a growth strategy in a higher risk position than the norm

Actions

- We will recover our existing occupancy levels from the impact of Covid by yr 2, increasing occupancy by yr 3
- We will test the need for a weekend OSC by establishing a 12 month pilot
- We will launch 2 new early learning and childcare centres (yr.1 and yr3)
- We will drive forward growth with innovation by establishing authentic family engagement and a centres of excellence model, starting with the launch of the new Family Matters – Loving
- Language programme in Castlemilk.

Outstanding Quality: Delivering Excellence

Objective: We will surprise families and stakeholders with the outstanding quality they experience across all of our services.

Our Approach

We believe that realising outstanding quality across all our customer experiences, our services and processes, will help ensure we achieve all of our 5 main objectives in the next three years.

Promoting attainment, ensuring every child or young person realises their fullest potential, means doing so much more than being a childcare organisation where learning happens. Attainment is impacted directly by a child's life and experiences beyond the learning environment, their health and wellbeing, their family circumstances, their community. Poverty and Attainment are linked. Families need support.

Our new model of delivery, The Indigo Experience, aims to shift thinking and practice to address these factors.

While grounded in research and national guidance (including Realising the Ambition, Curriculum for Excellence and Pre-Birth to 3), we believe The Indigo Experience is unique. We combine these basics with international best practice, with Indigo design innovations, our own pedagogy, the involvement of many partners, and, most critically, we engage families and communities in supporting a child to achieve their potential. The Indigo Experience allows us to tailor our work to meet the needs of any child or any community, regardless of demographic.

This is the critical new concept upon which we will progress our outstanding quality objective.

Progress

- We've evolved The Indigo Experience, incorporating 8 strands, to a point where we are able to attract investment for programmes which will help us implement it
- We are gaining recognition for our innovation and commitment to outstanding quality both locally and nationally
- Care Inspection Grades maintained at least at grade 5 last four years

Opportunities

- Positive funding climate
- Service Enhancement: New language and Communications Initiatives,
- Service Enhancement: New Family Matters Programme (See Objective 3),
- Collaboration to increase benefits to our families (See Objective 4)
- Service enhancement: Indigo Sparks Ideas Generation including Outdoor Learning
- Investing in TeamIndigo (See Objective 5)

Actions

- We will ensure all staff, families and stakeholders understand what is meant by The Indigo Experience, can articulate it and why it's important

- We will improve understanding of Closing the Attainment Gap and the strategies required to address it for Team Indigo and Families
- We will build on quality improvement work to date in outdoor play and learning, inclusion, trauma informed practice and the environment.
- We will improve understanding of UNCRC and work to make it obvious in our approach across all services.

Family Matters: Enhancing Positive Outcomes for Our Children

Objective: Family Matters will establish a whole family support infrastructure, increasing the number of families we serve and increasing positive outcomes for parents/carers, children and young people.

Our Approach

We understand that family life comes in all shapes and sizes and whilst welcoming our children into the world and watching them grow and flourish can be the most beautiful experience wished for, it is not always a bed of roses. Sometimes this might be exacerbated if a parent/carers own experience of family life has not been a positive one or if families are experiencing some of the challenges many working parents face in relation to poverty. Research indicates that what a child experiences in their family life may have a direct impact on the outcomes they achieve, and this can have an effect right through to adulthood on educational achievements, work opportunities, health and relationships. Whatever the home life looks like, every family hits some bumps along the way and a little support, advice, guidance or information, can very often go a long way for the whole family.

As a business, it's important for us to understand who our customers are. Our primary beneficiaries are the children and young people we welcome through the door each day. However, the paying customer is the parent/carer. They might be securing a service required for their family to allow them to go to work, or they might want their child to have experiences and opportunities they are not in a position to provide themselves. And as a business, we must satisfy both sets of customers to ensure their loyalty. This means that we have to really understand the needs of both, and understand how best to support each.

So, we created Family Matters – Indigo's flexible model of support that reflects the needs of the community and the families it serves. Its aim is to empower families to succeed, to progress out of poverty or to overcome specific short-term challenges they may face, all with the goal of giving the child the best possible start in life. It will be universally available: Indigo recognizes that all families need a little helping hand from time to time and therefore deserve to be able to access that support from people they know and trust, in an environment they know and trust.

Opportunities

- A positive funding environment for Early Years /Childcare development
- Funding has already been secured from Scottish Government to test a school aged Family Support Service
- Opportunity to design a blueprint prevention offer for rollout in other areas

Actions

- We will establish and embed whole family support model
- We will establish and deliver on Family Engagement action plan
- We will deliver on Access to Childcare commitments
- Through listening to and working with our families, we will evaluate our whole family support approach and consider income generating opportunities for this model.

Creating Change: Community Connection for Systemic Change

Objective: Build a reputation for championing the rights and interests of families, which will inspire the systemic change that is needed to give every family and every child the best start in life.

Community connection is essential in breaking the generational cycle of poverty for families

Achieving the best start for all families, is not something Indigo can achieve in isolation. There are many other factors that influence the challenges our families face day to day or sporadically, most of which are systemic and deep rooted in the communities in which they live. Some factors are local, some are stuck in generational cycles, some both; others can be national challenges that may require policy or regulatory change.

Indigo has already tested a wider community-based approach to influencing systemic change. The work of the Resilience Hub has demonstrated the importance of Indigo's bravery in leadership within the community at a local level. This is creating positive change for Indigo families and staff, and is positioning Indigo as a change-maker, enhancing our reputation locally and nationally. And positioning is important: this helped us to secure changes to local and national policy, and to secure more funding to invest in local services.

To influence and achieve real systemic change, Indigo must continue to think and work beyond the boundaries of our own organisation. Working on our own may bring short term results but it won't achieve the permanent, long-term changes necessary to improve the lives of working families still living in poverty and the generational cycle that comes with that. It is important therefore that we reach out to the wider community, to partners, and that we work at local and national level. And that connecting and influencing change is woven into the fabric of Indigo's culture.

External-facing

- Continue at senior level to engage with Stakeholders, at local and national level, to influence policy, practice and funding
- Build on our work with the Resilience Hub and Children's Neighbourhood Scotland to increase community resilience
- Evaluate the impact of Castlemilk Resilience Hub with partners, refreshing both the model and action plan. Ensure Learning informs the design of our Family Matters model.
- Increase awareness and understanding of trauma informed practice and adverse childhood experiences across collaboration partners and communities

Internal-facing

- Embed connecting and influencing in our internal culture, engaging the staff team at all levels, fostering ownership and a 'whole Indigo' consistent and streamlined approach; to include key messages, internal standards, systems for information-sharing, ensuring the right people are ready to engage
- Embed connecting and influencing as a strand within TeamIndigo leadership programmes
- Embed trauma informed practice and Adverse childhood experiences within TeamIndigo training and development programmes.

Actions

- We will establish a quality assurance system to empower TeamIndigo members at all levels to use their knowledge and experience to influence systemic change in their communities.
- We will continue to represent the needs and interests of our families to influence positive change for families in Scotland
- We will establish annually a key set of messages and change that we wish to influence.
- We will establish a framework to measure Indigo's social impact.

Building #Team Indigo: Recruiting and Retaining Special People

Objective: Indigo will recruit, retain and nurture special people, at the right time, in the right roles, to deliver outstanding quality for our families.

Our people are our primary asset, they make Indigo special and stand out from the crowd. It is our people and the relationships they nurture that gives families confidence, sees children and young people flourish and catches the eye of the sector. With nurture as one of our core values, it is essential that Indigo continue to acknowledge our people's incredible contribution and invest in this hugely important asset.

From a resourcing perspective, there are two significant challenges to overcome in the Early Learning and Childcare Sector: Firstly, with national expansion on the horizon, there is a shortage of people with the right skills and qualifications. Secondly, there are pay disparities within the sector, with public sector employers offering superior pay and terms and conditions which make it difficult to compete, to recruit and to retain good people.

From a health perspective, it is becoming more and more important that we take action to improve the health and wellbeing of our people. As a nurturing organisation, it is essential that we continue to explore what we can do to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes for our team, improving their quality of life, retaining them in services. This allows us to provide the consistency in relationships that is so vital to our families. Managing absence through ill health can be a significant expense to any people-oriented organisation. While we manage this well at Indigo, we recognise that this may always be a risk. Almost 80% of our team live in SIMD 1 and 2 areas and it is widely acknowledged that health outcomes in these areas are poor in general but particularly so in Glasgow, with life expectancy in some parts of the city at least 30% lower than in more affluent areas. Added to this, we have recently seen a significant number of employees battle with life-threatening diseases, and we have seen the impact Covid19 has had on mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Over the last few years investing in our organisational culture means we have laid down strong foundations.

By introducing and instilling a values-led approach, leadership development at every level, building creativity and innovation, we are deepening understanding of our purpose, and building new ways to nurture, value, engage and retain staff. By embedding the concept of a learning organisation, we have created formal structures for personal development, professional development, methods of formalising and applying best practice. We've improved how we recruit, fostering this values-led approach.

The direction of travel ahead requires each of these areas to be further developed with a particular focus on embedding our values-led culture, overcoming recruitment challenges, addressing wider skills shortages, ensuring employees are happy and healthy.

Actions

- We will develop a new People Plan to aid recovery from the impact of Covid, support delivery of our strategic objectives and respond with commitment to the findings of our annual people survey.
- We will attract, recruit and retain the best people
- Indigo will be recognised as a learning organisation
- We will develop a wellbeing strategy, taking a proactive approach to the wellbeing of Team Indigo



The Themes Which Make Us Brave

Leadership

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

John Quincy Adams

At Indigo we believe that leaders aren't all at the top and you don't need a title to be a leader. People at all levels are given opportunities to lead and this will be reflected throughout all of our actions, behaviours and decisions. Indigo's work around leadership at every level has been informed and developed through the various models of distributed leadership. The principle of leadership at every level has been crucial in achieving the progress that Indigo has made in the last 4 years. Now we need to grow that understanding and encourage more people to step up and take the lead. This will be crucial in achieving our vision, all 5 of our strategic objectives and our 10-year aspirations. No individual should be more important than the organisation and its work, therefore achieving a culture where everyone feels ownership and has the confidence to step up, in the interests of the organisation, their colleagues and the families, is vital to achieve the growth and reach we aspire to in a sustainable way. Everyone at Indigo will understand their role as a leader from the youngest child to the eldest member of staff and will use that skill set and knowledge to achieve best outcomes for them, their families and Indigo. This is an example we want to set for all Indigo children and young people, to inspire them to be ambitious and resilient.

Resilience

I can be changed by what happens to me but I refuse to be reduced by it!

Maya Angelou

The theme of resilience is two-fold at Indigo, resilience of the organisation and resilience of our people and communities – the outcome however is the same and well articulated by Maya Angelou above. Family life can be tough, growing up in communities challenged by poverty can be a challenge but an underpinning theme of resilience running as a thread through our strategy reminds us of the importance building resilience in our people, our communities and our organisation.

Indigo will create an environment that fosters resilience for staff, families and our communities. An environment that promotes a positive image of the future, empathy and compassion, values emotional intelligence, and understands the need to fail and to learn from failure.

The Long Game: Our Ten-Year Aspirations



Shared Wealth

We want to work towards a wealth distribution financial model: one that ensures the organisation generates sufficient reserves and financial flexibility from childcare solutions delivered in more affluent areas to allow investment in communities of greater deprivation, investment that will give all families access to outstanding quality learning and childcare experiences, that inspire and nurture.



Whole Family Support

All of our services will be created and delivered from a perspective of understanding and responding to the needs of the whole family. Family support will be an integrated element of all Indigo services and will reflect the specific needs of the communities they serve.



Reducing the Attainment Gap for Good

Indigo families, staff and wider communities will understand what is meant by the attainment gap and their role in addressing that. Children and young people experiencing Indigo services will buck the trend of national attainment gap statistics.



A Learning Academy

Our passion and commitment as a learning organisation will drive the development of the Indigo Children's Services Learning Academy, promoting professional growth and development for our staff, our stakeholders, future professionals. This approach will play a fundamental role in succession planning across the organisation.



Systemic Change in Communities – Eradicating Child Poverty

We want to play a role in the national efforts to eradicate child poverty. Communities served by Indigo will demonstrate confidence, ambition and creativity in their approach to creating change, fostering equity and eradicating child poverty for good.



ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW
IT WON'T MATTER
WHAT KIND OF CAR I DROVE
WHAT KIND OF HOUSE I LIVED IN
HOW MUCH MONEY I HAD IN THE BANK
NOR WHAT MY CLOTHES LOOKED LIKE
BUT
THE WORLD MAY BE A LITTLE BETTER
BECAUSE, I WAS IMPORTANT
IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD.

FOREST WITCRAFT

the
indigo
group