

Hello and welcome to The Approaching Schools Podcast. I'm Cerys Keneally, and I help children's activity providers to build key business relationships with schools and nurseries without having to use cold calling or stalking. I want to help you earn a more reliable and consistent income while building your social impact and enriching children's lives with ease. So join me as I take you on a journey, and let's make a positive difference together.

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Hello and welcome back to another episode of Approaching Schools. Today, I want to dig into one of the biggest reasons I hear providers hold themselves back from working with schools and nurseries, and it's that schools don't have the budget, and I get it. I used to be a primary school teacher myself during an economic crisis, and I was one of those teachers that was rationed at the photocopier, that was buying my own resources, that was creating all of my own things, like the role play area in my classroom instead of paying for it, because you've probably seen the headlines, you might have been a teacher yourself in underfunded school, and you may have even spoken to school or nursery staff. Perhaps you even had a reply to one of your emails with those exact words. But here's the truth, yes, schools are underfunded. Let's address that elephant in the room straight away, because budgets are stretch teachers are absolutely exhausted, and head teachers and nursery managers are having to make hard choices every day. But underfunded doesn't mean unfunded, and it definitely doesn't mean schools and nurseries don't value what you do. In fact, being underfunded is the very reason they need you right now more than ever. So in this episode, I'm going to show you why no budget isn't really the end of the conversation. The mindset shift that changes everything when you're approaching schools and nurseries and how to stop taking those budget objections personally and start showing up as the solution they really can't afford to miss.

So let's start with the trap that so many providers fall into. And I know about this having worked with 1000s of providers in the approaching Schools Challenge and hundreds more in the approaching schools Academy too, because you send an email, maybe you even have a meeting, and then the school or nursery says we'd love to, but we don't have the budget, and what happens then, all you hear is they don't want me. I'm not good enough. There's no point trying again. It feels personal, like a rejection of you and your work, doesn't it? But here's the reframe. When schools and nurseries say no budget most of the time, what they actually mean is one of three things. Number one, we haven't prioritised this yet. Number two, we don't yet see how this links to our objectives. And number three, simply, we don't understand it enough to invest and that's a very different message, now, isn't it? It's not a final No, it's a signal that they need you to make the connection clearer, stronger and more compelling, and this is where so many providers give up way too soon. They stop emailing, they stop following up. They decide schools and nurseries just aren't worth the effort. I've heard this all before, but meanwhile, someone else, maybe with less experience than you, less passion than you, and less quality than you, keeps going, and because they're confident and consistent, they end up winning the contract, and that's why this mindset shift matters so much. But here's the reframe. This is the shift I really want you to take on board, because schools and nurseries are chronically underfunded. They don't have the luxury of trial and error. They need partners who bring ready made solutions that work. And think of it like this, when you're short on time and stressed out, do you want more options, or do you just want someone to take the problem off your

plate because schools and stories are the same. When budgets are tight, they don't want to gamble. They want someone who looks credible, professional, trustworthy, and someone who can show them exactly how this will help them achieve their priorities. And that's why you need to step into this role of partner and not just provider.

Think of it like this, providers are nice to have education partners are essential. Providers are optional extras, but partners help schools and nurseries do more with less. Providers could well be a drain on the budget, but essential partners help schools make the most of the budget they've got. So instead of thinking they can't afford, you flip it to they can't afford not to work with you. And when you approach schools and nurseries with that energy, the staff feel the difference. So why should this matter to you? Then let's talk about why this reframe isn't just about schools and nurseries. Let's face it, it's about the survival and success of your business too. Because if you buy into the myth that schools and nurseries have no money, here's what really happens. You send fewer emails, you hesitate to follow up, and you undersell your offer because you don't believe it's realistic, and that means fewer opportunities, fewer contracts, and more stress in your business. But when you adopt the reframe, everything changes. You show up with confidence, you stop apologising for your prices, and you start positioning yourself as a solution, not a favour. And here's the real win, this protects you from burnout. And if you're a former teacher, you likely left the classroom to leave burnout behind, right? Because instead of chasing dozens of schools or nurseries and hearing no budget again and again, you can truly focus on quality partnerships with the schools or nurseries who do see your value. So let me share an example. One provider I worked with used to stop Outreach at the very first mention of budget, she'd think, that's it. There's no point trying again. But once she started practicing this reframe, she followed up differently. She stopped apologising, and started positioning her offer as a way to help schools meet their outcomes and the result. Within a single half turn, she landed three new contracts and nothing about the schools had actually changed. What changed was how she saw herself and how she showed up as a result.

And if you've been listening to this podcast for a while, you'll know I've done episodes about funding streams, and I've given you real examples of real providers and the types of funding streams, the ring fence budgets that schools and nurseries are continuing to fund their provision with. So go back and listen to this episode if you need more evidence that this is real and this is still happening. So here's the belief I want you to leave with today, schools and nurseries being underfunded is not the barrier, it's actually the reason you they need you more because you are not just a dance teacher or just a yoga coach or just a stem provider, you are an essential partner, helping schools achieve outcomes that they could not manage alone. And when you make that identity shift from provider to partner, budget objections lose their power. Now I know this can sound great in theory, but you might be thinking, Okay, but how do I actually do this in practice? How am I going to write those emails? How do I speak with that confidence, and how am I going to show up as a partner instead of a provider? Now, carers has told me to do this, but that's exactly why I created the approaching Schools Challenge. We started six years ago, and it has been fine tuned with over 8000 providers since then, it's a five day training where I take you step by step through the process of reaching out to schools and nurseries with clarity and confidence. And in this challenge, you're going to learn exactly how to stop taking no budget personally, to start showing up as a partner that schools and nurseries respect and to use my simple, tried and tested framework for outreach so you're not stuck staring at a blank email. I'm so proud that this challenge and the methods in this challenge have been endorsed by senior leaders in schools, and it's the perfect way to dip your toes in the water before you dive into work with me and my team further in my CPC accredited program, the Approaching Schools Academy. So if you've been waiting for the right time, this is it.

Join me inside the approaching Schools Challenge, and let's get you moving from hesitant provider to confident education partner. And you can sign up right now via. The link in the show notes. So thanks so much for tuning in today. And remember, underfunded does not mean unfunded, and it definitely doesn't mean unwanted, either. Schools and nurseries need you now more than ever. Thank you for listening to the approaching schools podcast. If you've enjoyed this episode, do come and let me know in my free group for children's activity providers approaching schools, so that I can make more content like this that you'll love. You can find me on my socials at Carys Keneally, and my inbox is always open. I would love for you to leave a review on iTunes and hit subscribe on your favourite platform so you can be the first to know when a new episode is ready until then, chat soon.