

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 everyone, and welcome back to another episode of Approaching Schools. Today I want to talk directly to those of you who are already working in schools and nurseries. You've got your foot in the door. You've proven that what you do is valuable, and schools and nurseries are saying yes, but maybe now you're starting to feel the pressure, you're wondering, how do I grow this now without running myself into the ground? Because here's the truth, adding more sessions, more schools and more staff, doesn't automatically mean more profit, and it definitely doesn't always mean more freedom and more time for your family. In fact, it can often mean more stress, more driving and more financial leaks than you ever bargained for.

So today, we're going to look at how you can scale smarter. I will be sharing some practical tips for strengthening your existing school and nursery partnerships, uncovering hidden profit and creating higher value packages that let you grow sustainably without burning out. Because let's face it, those of you who are listening, who are former teachers like myself, we didn't create a business beyond the classroom just to be burning out again, did we? In fact, more often than not, that's probably exactly why we left.

So let's start with the foundations. First. Growth without infrastructure can be absolute chaos. You might be able to keep everything in your head when you're running two or three clubs yourself, but if you want to scale, you are going to need systems in place. So I want you to ask yourself, Do I have a smooth onboarding process for new staff? Am I invoicing schools on time and tracking payments easily? Do I know exactly which sessions are profitable and which ones are just keeping me and my team busy? Because if the answer to those questions is a hesitant, not really, then this is your sign to pause before adding more to your timetable. Because what happens otherwise is this, you get a new school, and instead of it feeling exciting, it feels like a wait. Suddenly you are drowning in admin, chasing invoices and trying to slot in staff last minute, aren't you, and the joy that made you start this in the first place starts to disappear. So before you grow wider, build deeper foundations, a reliable invoicing system, a clear staff handbook, a simple spreadsheet or tool to track your session's profitability. These don't sound very glamorous, do they, but they are what makes scaling possible at the end of the day.

So I want to talk about something known as hidden profits, because many people think growth comes from more schools, more nurseries, more clubs, but actually a lot of money is leaking out of your existing partnerships. So start by analysing each partnership you have with your existing schools and nurseries, if they're clubs, for example, after you've paid for hall hire staff resources and your travel time, how much are you really making? Because this might surprise you. This surprised me when I started taking on team. You might find that one club is bringing in brilliant profit, while another, once you've factored in those travel and haul

costs, is barely breaking even. And here's the thing, reducing the number of clubs or sessions on your timetable doesn't mean reducing your income. Sometimes the opposite is actually true, because if you remove the ones that drain time and resources. Now you can double down on the ones that are absolutely thriving. I did this with my freelance work, any work that was provided with a third party provider. Actually, I cut out that kind of middleman, and really focused on the partnerships that were directly with the school that's just. One way that I did this in the very, very early stages of my children's activity business, because you will find that you can free up energy, and often your profit margin will increase straight away. This is exactly one of the exercises that I took one of my lovely one to one clients through recently on a VIP in person day, and we found that out of 18 existing school partnerships, we looked at just three, just three of those clubs, and we already found a profit leak. We already found that she could be making an extra 2000 pound per term, recurring from making just three of her 18 school partnerships more profitable. Imagine if we'd looked at the rest during the time that we had and the best bit about this is she doesn't need to increase her prices to do this. She doesn't need to incur extra costs like travel or staff or venue hire. It's going to be pure profit in her pocket when she starts deploying some of these strategies.

And these are also strategies that I focus on with my Approaching Schools Academy members, particularly at this time of year, when they've got perhaps dwindling numbers in a club and they're wondering how they can boost it in time for September, we look at all the different ways that we can really maximise the profitability of that club, and it starts with the numbers. It absolutely starts with the numbers, and we go from there. So that's the thing. It's so important to review what you already have before adding more, because growth doesn't always mean expansion. Sometimes it means refining what you already have. And I see people fall into this more more more, more more trap all the time. Providers who equate success with volume, like 10 schools, 15 clubs, 20 staff. It sounds impressive, doesn't it, but behind the scenes, they are exhausted. They're driving all across the county. They're spending so much on hall, hire and staff that their actual take home pay isn't much higher than when they had half the workload. Are you in this trap right now? Are you nodding along, thinking something needs to change? I want you to ask yourself this, do you want a business that looks big on paper or a business that feels good in real life, because the truth is that more sessions, more partnerships often means more complexity, and complexity eats profit.

Growth should create freedom for you and your family, not take it away. And you've probably heard me talk on this podcast before about having higher level packages to stop those inconsistent bookings. So how do you grow without simply piling on more? The answer is, increase your partnership value with your schools and nurseries. Instead of being, for example, the After School Club provider, become a holistic partner to the school. Instead, think about what else you can offer than what you're currently delivering. There. Is it lunchtime activities to support wellbeing? Is it teacher CPD or training sessions? Maybe it's help with special days or special weeks, like sports days or science week or river enrichment sessions or even parent workshops.

Maybe it's whole school packages that tie in with their curriculum or priorities on a long term contract, because by doing this, you shift from being a provider that they slot in when it's convenient for them to a partner that they invest in long term. I want you to write this down if you are able to shift from a provider that schools and nurseries slot in when convenient to a partner they invest in long term. And it's so much easier to expand with the schools and nurseries you already know than to keep chasing new ones. And that is exactly why this is going to be the entire focus of our next in person mastermind day that I will be inviting you to in London on the 18th of October, 2025 because let's be real, sometimes prices do need to go up. If you haven't raised them in a

while, review them, because your cost has almost certainly risen since then, but instead of jumping straight to higher fees per session, focus on offering packages that feel like a no brainer for the school, because that way they see more impact, and you see more income without having to drive across town three or more days per week. So let's bring this all together. Then here's what I want you to do as a result of listening in to this episode. Build your infrastructure now so that growth when it comes feels smooth, not stressful. Look for hidden profits before you add more sessions to your timetable, and don't fall into the. Trap of equating more with success, because more partnerships doesn't always mean more money or more freedom, and focus on creating higher value partnerships where you're seen as a key part of the school or nursery's ecosystem, not just an add on something we will absolutely be focusing on in person in October. So remember, sustainable growth isn't about saying yes to every opportunity. It's about saying yes to the right ones, those that allow your business to support you, your family and your bigger vision without burning out.

Thank you so much for joining me today. If this episode resonated with you. I would love for you to share it with another provider who is at the same stage and let me know which tip you're going to implement. First, come and chat to us in the approaching schools and nurseries free group on Facebook. But before you go, I have to mention this exciting in person day that I am putting on on the 18th of October. It's the day after the children's activities associations conference in London. So if you're staying over, it will be absolutely perfect for you, because it will be just 10 minutes walk from where the 10th anniversary party celebrations are being hosted the night before, and I will be delivering a day all about making more from your existing school and nurseries partnership. So we will be spending the day uncovering your hidden profits, designing higher value packages to deepen relationships with schools and nurseries and exploring practical ways to increase the value of each school or nursery to your business, you'll also work on building your confidence in pricing and selling. We had amazing breakthroughs on our Birmingham mastermind day earlier in the year, and because of that, we've actually already had 11 spaces go within the first week of chatting about this new mastermind day happening in London in the autumn, and the early bird deal is open for you until the end of the summer holidays, so lunch and refreshments are included. And honestly, the magic really does happen when you're in the right room. So if you're ready for a deep dive into your business and want to scale smarter without burning out. Grab your place now. The link is in the show notes. I would love to see you there.

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 Cerys 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.